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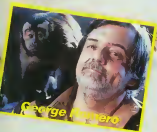
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Things To Come

Michael Courtland

ROBO RUCTIONS

Just what on Earth is happening on the set of *RoboCop II*? Following last issue's coverage of one of the most eagerly awaited genre movies of the year (it won the 1988 Starburst Film Poll), I hear that things haven't been proceeding too smoothly on the set. In fact, at times they haven't been proceeding at all. Tinseltown has been awash with rumours of production problems on the Frank Miller/Walton Green scripted movie, which focuses Robo fighting the literally mind-blowing effects of a new drug called Nuke. The problems date back months to producer Jon Davison's original search for a director, which almost turned into a

thumb-through the telephone book. Davison, one of the most likeable and entertaining movers and shakers in Hollywood, finally settled on Irvin Kershner and shooting on the \$25 million production started in Texas at the beginning of September. Unfortunately that's when the real problems started - vociferous on-set arguments between returning stars Peter Weller and Nancy Allen and veteran director Kershner and his crew. Hold-ups of all kinds have resulted in the film overshooting both its budget and its shooting schedule - in fact, it's only recently wrapped. Still, you know what some old staggers say - happy set, lousy movie.

RoboCop II: Due for release in the Summer



Nam Nightmares

Ever wondered about what might have been? How would the annals of our favourite genre have differed if Steven Spielberg had made *ET* the story of evil aliens terrorising a Kentucky homestead, as he originally planned, or even if the great man had shot Paul (Taxi Driver) Scudder's original and fascinating script for *Close Encounter*, in which the rôle wasn't Roy Neary, a small-town electrician, but Jake Van Dorn, a haunted FBI investigator and latter-day St Paul who experienced his very own revelation on the road to Texas. Or even if, as was suggested at various points in recent Hollywood history, Canadian grue guru David Cronenberg had directed *Flashdance* and *Witness*...

Coincidentally the eventual director of *Flashdance* and, Adrian Lyne, is now turning one of those great 'might have been' movies into a 'definitely will be'. And it may just launch a whole new genre category - the Vietnam Fantasy epic...

Bruce Joel Rubin's *Jacob's Ladder*, a tortured, terrifying tale of one man's exorcism of his own very real inner demons has been tagged as one of Hollywood's great unmade scripts ever since it was written back in 1981. It's come close to being filmed on a number of occasions, and has interested top Fantasy talents like Ridley Scott and Brian de Palma, but had evaded that steady green light 'til late last year, when Hollywood's Hottest Brit, Adrian Lyne, and

Britain's Most Pugnacious Producer, Lana Marshall, teamed up to bring Rubin's extraordinary vision to the screen. Lyne is on a steaming streak after *Fatal Attraction* and *9 1/2 Weeks* and he rates *Jacob's Ladder* one of the finest scripts he's ever read. "I was originally planning to do another movie and then I read this, and I thought - I've got to do it!" he says.

Rubin's script kicks off in Platoon country, deep in the Vietnam jungle in 1967, where Jacob Singer and his troop are sharing a between-battles lull. Suddenly, the soldiers explode into acts of violence, bayoneting and hacking each other to death. Flash forward to New York, present day, and Jacob, now grappling with demons on the inner city subway and trying to come to grips with life's most important questions - why am I here and am I good or bad?

Rubin is an unusual writer in that he never knows how a script is going to progress when he starts writing it, and his stream of consciousness penmanship is given full vent in *Jacob's Ladder*, where the explosions of inner demons into the real world are somewhat reminiscent of the dream/reality crossovers practised so remorselessly by Freddy Krueger, in the Elm Street movies. The difference is that the terrifying happenings here actually mean something - but exactly what, we'll have to wait 'til the film's release (later this year) to find out.

THEME DREAMS

Latest news on the planned MCA/Universal theme park that may be sited in Essex is that the most tightly-buttoned studio in Hollywood have approached the BBC with a view to enlisting Auntie Beeb's support and participation in the proposed venture. Such a collaboration would involve a spotlight being thrown on programme-making and perhaps rides based on BBC shows - an interesting prospect for fans of *Blake's 7* and *Doctor Who*. BBC Director General, Michael Checkland reports that the Corporation are giving the proposal "enthusiastic consideration". Meanwhile, Essex residents are already banding together in an attempt to prevent the demolition of homes and

businesses which would certainly occur when the park is built. Mind you, surely anything is an improvement on Dagenham.



LAST DANCE

Not so long ago, one of the high rollers at Paramount was telling me that he couldn't wait to see which direction British heart-throb Charles Dance's career would take after his performance as a black-cloaked baddie in Eddie Murphy's misbegotten Fantasy movie *The Golden Child*. Of course, the answer was 'nowhere' - in Hollywood terms at least - and certainly as regards our favourite genre. But now he's having another crack - and taking on Freddy Krueger in the process. The latest challenge for the actor who rose to fame in *The Jewel in the Crown* and once topped a list of Britain's sexiest men is to cover up the face that's made him famous to take the lead in a new television mini-series version of *The Phantom of the Opera* - yes, that's right, another one.

Upping the prestige factor here, however, is top

director Tony Richardson and co-stars Burt Lancaster and Britain's Ian Richardson - a classy company if ever there was one. Dance has revealed that this version won't have any of the over-the-top effects which helped to make the Robert Englund *Phantom* a minor hit last Autumn in the US - but what it will have is the real McCoy when it comes to locations. That'll come in the shape of the Paris Opera House, where, of course, most of the eerie shenanigans take place.

Playing the *Phantom*'s secret love, Christine, will be unknown American actress and ballerina, Teri Polo. According to Dance, romance will be a key element of the film's hoped-for success. 'The *Phantom*'s love for Christine is presented as pure and platonic. There are no gratuitous scenes and no horror make-up.' I just hope it's a touch more interesting than it sounds...



Licence to KILL-Q (Desmond Llewelyn) and Bond (Timothy Dalton)

DALTON IS BOND

Despite various rumours to the contrary Timothy Dalton will return as James Bond 007 in an as yet untitled adventure from producers Cubby Broccoli and Michael Wilson. But they and the powers that be at MGM/UA do seem to have taken notice of some of the criticisms levelled at *Licence to Kill* (not least in this very magazine) - and probably even greater heed of the film's poor performance at the American box office. Of course, the men behind Bond are now in a slightly tricky position. Their man's superheroic escapes and

daredevil thunder have already been stolen by Indiana Jones. Their attempts to take Bond in another direction in *Licence to Kill* and fashion a hard-hitting, contemporary thriller resulted in the movie seeming like, as I think John Brosnan said, a feature-length episode of *Miami Vice*. Certainly, MGM/UA president Richard Berger is well aware of the problem facing the world's least secret agent - "We realise we need to give him more humour and more wryness." In other words, get Timothy to stop acting so much.

WIM'S WORLD

More news on the new Fantasy epic from Wim Wenders (director of the super-stylish *Hammett* and *Wings of Desire*), one of the most unusual and haunting genre entries of recent years. *Until The End of the World*, a \$20 million 'futuristic Hitchcockian love story' slated to shoot in 17 countries on five continents - a production manager's nightmare if ever I heard one - will now top line *Altered States* star William Hurt and original *Exorcist* Max Von Sydow for one of the most expensive independent movies ever made. Mind you, that whopping price tag won't worry veteran

producer Anatole Dauman (in his long and illustrious career, he's worked with luminaries like Bertolucci and Borowczyk) who is also taking a technical gamble by having his gifted cinematographer Robby Müller (his last genre contributions were to *Repo Man* and John Schlesinger's *The Believers*) shoot the whole caboodle in the rarely used 65mm process, previously seen to spectacular visual effect in David Lean's *Ryan's Daughter* and *Lawrence of Arabia*. That alone should make *Until the End of the World* fascinating viewing.

William Hurt, due to star in *Until The End of the World*, seen here in Warner Brothers' *The Accidental Tourist*





The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part 2: Officially dead to the British!

FREDDY'S FOE

How on Earth do you come up with a Horror character who can take over the rampaging reins from one of the Fantasy field's certifiable, living (well, undead) legends? Easy - you give him a bigger chainsaw! That's the plan from producers New Line, for their hot Horror sequel **Leatherface: Texas Chainsaw Massacre III**.

Robert Shaye and the other head honchos at Hollywood's most successful indie production company plan to bounce back from the box-office bad dreams of **Nightmare on Elm Street V** with what they hope will be another highly lucrative fear franchise. They're hoping that the only movie star who changes not just his make-up, but his face as well, is going to cut a swathe through box office receipts when the picture is released worldwide. For UK gore fans who never even got a chance to check out Tobe Hooper's return to the toothed in **Chainsaw 2** (now pronounced officially dead by both the film's British distributors and the British censors no less), that's an appetising prospect. Particularly as director Jeff Burr (who after helming **Stepfather 2** is getting a reputation as the maker of eagerly awaited sequels) is promising a follow-up every

bit as disturbing as Hack-happy Hooper's original. And not only that, Leatherface has got himself a whole new family...

Chainsaw 3 kicks off with a young couple lost in the American Midwest who stray off the beaten track and into the clutches of Leatherface, and his equally carnivorous relatives - a prospect only surpassed in the Horror stakes by the thought of having to sit through a whole **New Kids on the Block** album. And that's just the beginning... Working from an original screenplay by hard-core Horror writer David J. Schow, director Jeff Burr is following in the footsteps of most other lens liners working in the genre, by promising to go just that little bit further.

"I really think we've done things here that nobody's done before," he says. "There'll be a couple of scenes where people will say - 'My God, did they really do that?'"

There's even a sad final, in which old Leatherface finally pops his dogs and heads up to that great toothed in the sky. Of course, if this sequel's success warrants a further installment of power tool mayhem, that may change. In fact I can hear that ghostly chainsaw buzzing already...

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Like Father...

And still they come... After the muted critical and audience response to **Goldeneye**, the TV version of 007 creator Ian Fleming's real life story, the plan now is to try again and paint the story on a broader canvas - or at least a bigger screen. And to keep the Bondage in the family, the producers have enlisted none other than ex-Robin of Sherwood and chip off the old Bond block Jason Connery to play the reclusive novelist, this time in a supposedly true tale of daring escapes, ingenious espionage and dangerous damsels - all

rather removed from the true facts of Fleming's life, it must be said - but when did that stop a film producer? Expect **The Secret Life of Ian Fleming** (so secret even he didn't know much about it) in cinemas this Spring.

Ex-Robin of Sherwood, Jason Connery



Harryhausen Exhibits

Attention all readers who haven't yet caught up with the Museum of the Moving Image (MOMI) exhibition, **Creatures of Fantasy** in London! You've still got a chance to see it, because its run has been extended until 29th April. So there's still plenty of time to take a look

at the work of that master of the art of twitching dinosaurs and sword-fighting skeletons, Ray Harryhausen, creator of many of the cinema's most magical special effects, in films such as **Jason and the Argonauts** and **The Golden Voyage of Sinbad**.

TV News

Great news for **Robin of Sherwood** fans - the only man I know who looks good in green is set to return in a brand new series of small screen adventures penned by series creator, Richard Carpenter. Producer Paul Knight first approached the last actor to don the Lincoln, Jason Connery, who turned down another shot at the bows and arrows on the grounds he was too busy. Now, original series star Michael Praed will reclaim the rôle when the series starts shooting later this year - and Knight hopes to lure most of the other original cast members back too.

Contrary to circulating rumours, the promising US genre series, **Quantum Leap** (scheduled for Tuesday nights on BBC 2), has not been cancelled, and is in production at this very moment. Indeed, Dean Cain's portrayal of Albert the hologram man has recently earned him a 'best actor' award. However, the Wes Craven-created Fantasy sitcom, **The People Next Door** - which starred Jeffrey Jones (*Howard the Duck*, *Beetlejuice*) as an inspired cartoonist whose creations literally jump off the page at people - has departed to that big sketch pad in the sky.

Keep a look out for one of the most interesting game shows to 'come on down' to British TV in many a long month - and no wonder, since it's got a distinct Fantasy tinge to it. Called **The Crystal Maze**, it sounds rather like a TV version of Michael Crichton's 1973 movie **Westworld** (which sold itself with the memorable ad line 'the perfect fantasy world of the future where nothing can go wrong...'). It focuses on

British TV viewers will get another chance to see the 1970's film **Phase IV**



FANTASY ROUND-UP

NeverEnding Story and **Enemy Mine** director Wolfgang Petersen will return later this year with a Hitchcockian thriller called **Plastic Nightmare** (and no, it's not Tracey Ullman's life story) which'll star William Hurt and Sissy Spacek working from a screenplay co-written by Andrew (Omen II) Birkin...

Highlander 2 is currently shooting in Buenos Aires under the direction of everybody's favourite Australian Russell Mulcahy, with intrepid **Starburst** reporter Alan Jones on the spot for a location report.

Meanwhile Paul (RoboCop) Verhoeven has just wrapped his Annie epic **Total Recall** - from a script by Allen writers Dan O'Bannon and Ronald Shusett - for a reported budget of 50 million big

ones...

Talking of Annie, I hear that he's about to step up to the director's chair (in fact, he'll probably have to have one specially enlarged) to shoot a television episode of **Tales from the Crypt**...

Everywhere I go I seem to bump into TV writers desperate to break into features, because that's where the real money is. In the States, of course, the situation is completely the opposite - the small screen is where the big money is, and that's where more and more big names, like Mel Brooks, Wes Craven and Roddick (**Alien Nation**) O'Bannon, are headed. All you have to do is create a TV series, watch it go into syndication and wait for the dollars to roll in. Sounds easy, doesn't it?

Moviegoers Stateside are

Marty (Michael J Fox) tries to revive an unconscious Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) as he gets stranded in 1955 for the second time! Part III is due this summer



two teams of contestants who have to fight their way across various landscapes, ranging from the distant past to the far future. Director David G. Croft has worked hard to give the show a real edge and says, "The programme is quite heavily movie-influenced. In the Aztec set we've gone for a **Raiders of the Lost Ark** type

feel, and in the Future landscape the look is very much **Blade Runner**." If you didn't tune in for the first helping, you can catch up with **The Crystal Maze** on Thursdays at 8.30 on Channel 4.

Also on Channel 4, British Horror insomniacs will have been enjoying a feast of old genre movies (including

set to have a bumper genre Summer - amongst the movies scheduled for release (and hence coverage in **Starburst**) are **RoboCop 2**, **Gremlins 2**, **Dick Tracy** and **Back to the Future III**...

Ian Charleson's last film performance was in a genre movie, Dario Argento's splendid **Opera**, and it's nice to report that Charleson more than holds his own amidst Argento's spectacular visuals, which includes some extraordinarily effective bird's-eye view camerawork...

Bo Derek will be even more toothsome than usual in her next movie - she'll play Countess Dracula...

Sigourney Weaver, currently expecting her first baby, is still unsure whether she wants to appear in **Alien III** or not - so two versions have apparently been written, one with Ripley, and the other without. Last I heard, producers Twentieth Century Fox were having problems getting one script that worked, let alone two...

Paul Hogan is currently putting the finishing touches to a top-secret Fantasy movie for Paramount, called **Almost an Angel**...

Keep an eye out in your local video shop for David Lynch's latest effort, **Twin Peaks**. Made for American television - which, bearing in mind the tone and quality of Lynch's work, is rather bizarre in itself - it spins a weird and wonderful tale of murder and mystery in the American Midwest. Kyle Lachlan (**Dune**, **The Hidden**) stars...

'Til next time

Village of the Damned, **Eraserhead** and **White Zombie** in the Saturday night *It's Later than you Think* slot. Future films scheduled around the haunting hour of midnight are **Phase 4** and **Them!** (February 24th), **Frankenstein** (the 1931 Boris Karloff version) and **The Ghoul** (March 3rd). Scare yourselves to sleep!



Meddings Magic

The Thunderbirds Years

A *Starburst* interview by Howard Maxford

Special effects maestro Derek Meddings is regarded as one of the top men in his field, internationally. With such blockbusters as *Moonraker*, *Superman* and *Batman* to his credit, it isn't hard to understand why - but his beginnings were far more humble.

HE first began to make a name for himself in the 1960's by providing the effects for such popular TV shows as *Thunderbirds* and *Stingray*, but as he said recently when we met, "A lot of people think I started with the Andersons. I didn't."

To find out how and where Mr Meddings started in the industry, though, we must first backtrack even further to his formative years.

Early Days

"I didn't have any ambitions to go into special effects, because I think at that stage I just wanted to get into the industry. My mother and father were in the industry during the Alexander Korda days, when Denham was a big thriving studio. My mother was a stand-in for Merle Oberon at one stage in her career, and a secretary to Alexander Korda for a period of time. My father was a master carpenter."

However, in Meddings's case, it wasn't the easy case of the son also rising. "You had to be in the union to get into the film industry. It was very difficult and I had no leg-up from my mother and father. They used to take me round the studio and to the art department, and I remember a production designer called Paul Sheriff (Henry V, Vice-Versa, Moulin Rouge). I



Derek Meddings Photo © S. Payne

went to see him [about work], but I was only sixteen, so there wasn't much chance of getting in at that time."

A Bit Thick

In the meantime, Meddings trained as an artist and did the then obligatory stint in



Thunderbirds had lots of explosions © TC

national service.

"When I left school, the only real thing I wanted to do was paint.

I was a bit thick at school - hated it. So my mother and father thought the best thing for me to do was to go to art school. I really wanted to be a commercial artist at that time."

However, once out of national service, his career began to get places (if rather slowly) when he answered an ad in a London paper. "They were asking for a title

Derek Meddings sets up a shot of one of the Angel aircraft for *Captain Scarlet* © TC



Meddings also worked on *Fireball XL5* © TC



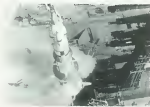
Left: A realistic rocket launch from *Doppelgänger* (USA title *Journey to Far Side of the Sun*)



Derek Meddings puts the finishing touches to the Doppelpgänger rocket



The Doppelpgänger rocket designed for the far side of the moon



Doppelpgänger-the launch



Doppelpgänger - a massive explosion!

artist at Denham studios to do lettering on films. I hated the idea of doing that, especially having been trained as an artist, but I thought: It's a way in. So I sat up and did some lettering and got the job."

Even though Meddings wasn't particularly fond of the job, it did mean that



The Trollenberg Terror: Ice cold aliens on the move

he was in the business. And when, one day, a background had to be painted out for one title sequence, Meddings was on the spot, volunteering his services.

"They were in a bit of a panic and the head of the department, George Irans said to me, 'You can paint. Could you do the background?' So I said, 'I'll do it.' Because that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to paint, so eventually I got that job, too - doing backgrounds and not the letterings."

Lucky Break

For most people, a lucky break usually consists of meeting the right person at the right place and time, and Meddings did this when he met Les Bowie, "the daddy of British special effects" as Meddings calls him.

"He was a matte artist (his early work includes *Great Expectations*, *The Red Shoes*, plus most of the classic Hammer Horrors), and when I saw what he did I said, 'That's what I want to do. I want to be a matte artist.'"

At the time, Meddings was working for Anglo Scottish Pictures doing commercials, and when, eventually, Les Bowie joined the company and set up a matte painting department, he asked the eager Meddings to join him. "What I'd been employed by Anglo Scottish Pictures to do was make models... I then got somebody who was working at Denham to take over this job for me and I went into doing matte painting with Les Bowie. And that's really how I got into doing effects. [Also], Les was doing all the Hammer Horror films and I used to go as his assistant. We used to do the matte painting [together] and Les would do all the effects on the picture. Bodies falling to pieces, etc. We also did terrible films like *Trollenberg Terror*.

"And Les was always having to do things on the cheap. And a lot of the cheap effects he did I still think are fantastic. And I still think in Les's way, if I can do some-

thing with string and bits of wire, I'd still prefer to do it that way."

Then came along a job opportunity which helped to establish both Meddings' career and his reputation; a job with Gerry and Sylvia Anderson.

Stand by for Action!

"The job was offered to Les originally. Gerry Anderson came 'round one afternoon; he was talking to Les and I heard him ask Les if he'd be interested in coming down to Maldenhead where they were shooting at a place called Islet Park, and would he be interested in coming down on weekends and weekday evenings to do any little effects they needed. They were doing a series called *Twizzle*... Or was it *Torchy*?"

I can never remember which way round they come. There are a lot of Gerry Anderson fans around who can probably tell me more about me than I can! Anyway, I could see Les didn't want to do it and heard him say to Gerry Anderson, 'I can't do it, 'cause I'm too busy, but I know someone who will. He'll do it! And that's how it started!'"

Meddings first met the Andersons in Addlestone, in an old disused cinema (which is no longer there) where Bowie had set up his matte shop. It was owned by Anglo Scottish Pictures, but, soon after, they moved the operation to Shepperton.

"We used to work 'til two or three in the morning, because the people involved all had daytime jobs. The Andersons and the rest of the camera crew all worked in the film industry either on commercials or documentaries. I used to paint backgrounds, like cottages and fences, then cut them out to give them a little relief. Eventually, the series went down so well they wanted to make something better... So they started to do *Four Feather Falls*, which was a cowboy series.

"And this was still part-time for me. I only joined the company full-time when



Meddings colleague Sean Whitaker Cook working on a shot for *Captain Scarlet* as they started doing *Fireball XL5*. By that time I was getting £20 a week. God, I thought if I could keep that up I'd be a millionaire!"

As the Andersons' programmes became more sophisticated and adventurous, so did Meddings's work on them.

"I was always trying to do things that were believable, even if the puppets weren't. I did my part of it as if I was working on a major film. And we always shot on 35mm. In actual fact, we were the first people to put out a television series in colour."

On the various series which followed (including *Fireball XL5* and *Stingray*) Meddings designed the model work, whilst Reg Hill acted as production designer. Hill also co-designed the *Stingray* vehicle with Meddings. However, it was with *Thunderbirds* that Meddings's work really took off.

Thunderbirds were Go!

"It was on *Thunderbirds* that I took over the design of all the vehicles... I used to do them in the evenings and then I'd take them in the following day and let Reg and Gerry Anderson see them. They were designed roughly knowing what they had to do, so I didn't necessarily make it any easier for myself, as I found out later on when I came to shoot some of the things.

"As we got more ambitious, we had to have *Thunderbird 2* land in front of the camera really close. We had to use a very big *Thunderbird 2*, which then had to be held up on wires, which had a tendency to break just as we were doing a shot.

"The scriptwriters didn't visualise what the vehicles should look like. They just said, they should do such and such a thing. I think that on *Thunderbird 2*, the description said 'The front opens and out comes a vehicle.' I thought, that's a bit boring. If it jacks itself up and leaves its pod, that



Derek Meddings sets up Lady Penelope's mansion in preparation for *Thunderbird Six* (A Tiger Moth bi-plane) © etc



Derek Meddings and his crew work on one of the models of *Thunderbird 2* © Derek Meddings

would be better. I used to design them as I felt they would look good on screen."

Meddings also had a hand in the distinctive ways in which the vehicles took off.

...2...1!!!

"*Thunderbird 2* took off the way I wanted it to. For *Thunderbird 1*, it was actually in the script that it came out from under a swimming pool. I think when I designed it we all knew it had to take off on its tail. I think at that particular time

(mid 1960s) no-one thought a rocket would take off any other way."

Meddings was the man solely in charge of the effects work.

"I had a totally free hand, because no-one else knew how to do effects, so whatever I said, I did."

Taking a leaf out of Les Bowie's book, he often found that the simplest of ideas could solve the knottiest of problems. The problem of filming lengthy runway take-offs and landings was simply a matter of logic.

"I knew we couldn't track with vehicles. We had to have a static camera and everything else had to move. So I came up with the idea of a rolling road. It was in three sections. First, there was a small foreground piece about a foot wide which we had at a slight angle so that we had a better chance at depth of focus. We covered this with artificial grass and had that go round very fast. Then we had the runway, which was a little bit slower. Then the background was another strip which we put trees and bushes on, and that would go around a lot slower. The trees and bushes, when they went under the stage, usually fell off. In fact we found it very difficult to attach things to this distant piece. Then we had the sky beyond that which also moved at whatever speed we wanted. And that's how we used to do all the flying shots, hang the craft up and just have a roller backing. And that roller backing is still in use at Pinewood after all these years. They bought it and still use it."

The Anderson connection culminated with three films.

"Gerry Anderson really wanted to be in the film industry and not be involved with puppets... *Thunderbirds Are Go* was the first one he did, then *Thunderbird Six*. Then we did *Doppelgänger*, which was also re-titled *Journey to the Far Side of the Sun* (for US release). That was great. I stopped doing *Thunderbirds* and concentrated on the film - 'though I still looked after the special effects stages that I had. But that's what Gerry Anderson really wanted to get known for - for making low budget, but expensive-looking pictures with lots of effects.

No Demand

"A lot of people in the special effects side of the industry today started as assistants at Century 21. Like George Gibbs, Brian Johnson, Richard Conway and Peter Ragg, who's head of the BBC Visual Effects Department. But there came a time when the studio was closed. We did *UFO* and, the story goes, Lew Grade felt that there wasn't a great demand for Space pictures any more and that they'd run their course. There was probably something else behind it, but he closed down the studio. And after something like ten years, we were all out of work. Everybody had to go off into the film industry and get their own work wherever they could. I went to Denmark to do a picture for Tony Masters, the production designer, called *The First of January*. It was a terrible film - absolutely abysmal - had a good cast: Oliver Reed, Diane Cilento, Geraldine Chaplin. Didn't make a good film, 'though, had some of the worst effects I think I've ever seen in my life!"

After *The First of January* (which wasn't even released) things couldn't possibly get worse. In fact, the skies were the limit...

Next issue: the James Bond years, followed by Meddings's Oscar win for *Superman*, whilst in the final instalment (appearing in issue 141), *Batman* and the effects epic *The Never Ending Story: Part 2*. ★



Derek Meddings with one of the aircraft used in *Thunderbirds* - RC



Ted and Derek with a radio controlled model plane (built with it's own induction engine) which was the intended 'star' for a proposed feature film by Century 21. The film, like the plane, never really got off the ground - RC

new tapes are brand new (not re-runs). Post and Packing £3.25 video, £1.50 for two videos, and £1.45 for three or more. Video rental rates are double UK postage rates. Also please note: videos will be shipped overseas. For US Cheques/PO payable to AF of A, Japan and consignment are welcome. Please quote poster number 1, expiry date. If you prefer to phone in your order please call by Access or Barclaycard then phone (0177) 595131 between 10am and 11.30pm. Postal address: AF Video, 1 Orchard Way, Mansel, St. Gwynn, Northumbria, England NE10 5ET.

FANTASY

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

DR WHO

[illegible]

By Richard Sayer

Colin Towns's score for *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* has already been lauded in the pages of *Starburst* by Michael Courtland (Things to Come, issue 136). Ex-keyboard player with the Ian Gillan band (her biggest hit was *Trouble* in 1980), Towns first came to my attention (and Michael's as well!) when he provided the score for Richard Loncraine's macabre supernatural Fantasy, *Full Circle* (aka *The Haunting of Julia*) in 1976. The *Full Circle* score was a finely crafted piece, featuring flute and piano against a synthesised backing, and it was, in itself, a truly haunting piece of work. Even now, the album (released in 1978 by Virgin, and long since deleted) remains among my most oft-played discs. Towns then dropped out of sight for a while, but has recently returned with a bang, providing excellent scores for television series (*Blind Justice*, *The Fear*, *Capital City*) and film (*Rawhead Rex*, *Belman* and *True* and the forthcoming *Vampire's Kiss*).

Towns's *Willoughby Chase* score sees him moving away from the synthesisers which have been the mainstay of much of his work so far, into the use of a full orchestra (the *Symphonie Orchestra Granique* of Munich, who also performed Christopher Young's *Hellraiser 2* score). It's an impressive offering, finely and confidently orchestrated by Towns himself and, although a touch derivative in places (Mussorgsky's *Night on the Bare Mountain* makes an obvious appearance in *The Ski Sledge*), shows much promise. I eagerly await more of Towns's work.

SOUNDTRACKS

Number 6 again

The Silva Screen Records album of music from that enigmatic and baffling television series, *The Prisoner*, is taken from the original, limited edition, released years ago by 'Six of One', the Official *Prisoner* Appreciation Society.

This remastered and superbly re-packaged release includes Ron (Doctor Who) Grainer's theme (in both its complete and Main Title versions, including sound effects) along with *Chimes* (Wilfred Joseph's original, unused theme) and numerous cues from individual episodes, composed by Wilfred Josephs and Albert Elms. Some of these are arrangements of classical favourites: *Band Marches into Wlaga* comes from Strauss's *Radetski March*, for instance. The sleeve notes are well researched, with a note of which episode each piece is taken from. It's all very dated, of course (the music, I fear, has dated more than the series, which seems timeless), but it's an essential addition to the record collection.

Goldsmith

The *Soundtracks* of Jerry Goldsmith with the *Philharmonia* (Decca Records) is a studio version of a concert Goldsmith gave at London's Barbican Centre

in March 1967 - and it's superb. It features concert arrangements of music taken from some of his best scores, including *The Blue Max* and *Gremlins*. The *Gremlins* suite is of special interest as it includes music not featured on the original soundtrack mini-album (notably, the wonderful Christmas opening sequence). Also featured, along with *The Waltons* and *Doctor Kildare* (!) are *The Man From Uncle* and *Polltergeist*.

While on the subject of Goldsmith, his score for the last part of the *Omen* trilogy, *The Final Conflict*, has been re-released. The series itself was distinctly tired by this time, but Goldsmith provided superb music to the end. Familiarity necessarily means, however, that this score has less impact than the original *Omen*.

Daft noises

Halloween 4 has only recently hit UK cinemas and already there's a record of music from *Halloween 5 - The Revenge of Michael Myers*. The credits read 'Music by Alan Howarth, *Halloween* theme by John Carpenter'. Howarth was Carpenter's collaborator on the original *Halloween* music - and this score is a virtual re-hash of those original tracks, with a few extra daft noises stuck on top. My best recommendation is that you forget this album and buy *Hal-*

loween 1 (if you can still get hold of it).

The same recommendation applies to the re-release of Carpenter's 1983 *Christine* music (another collaboration with Howarth). Carpenter has re-recorded the *Halloween* score so many times it's getting tedious. *Halloween* was brilliant and original, but it really is about time Carpenter wrote something new.

Yet another re-release: *Dark Star*. This is taken direct from the film soundtrack, and features dialogue and plot mixed with Carpenter's music. At the time of the original album release, videos were not available, so an album of the complete soundtrack made sense. Now that we can all get hold of *Dark Star* on video, this album makes no sense at all. Nevertheless, I enjoyed listening to it - and the film works surprisingly well 'soundonly'.

Fly into Space

Available on Compact Disc for the first time (as a UK release, anyway!) is Howard Shore's music for David Cronenberg's version of *The Fly*. It's interesting to compare this music with Christopher Young's score for the recent sequel (which I reviewed in issue 137). Young's score contrasts very lyrical passages with purely aleatory sections. Shore's music falls between these two extremes - stylistically it has much in common with Jerry Goldsmith's *Alien*.

A real blast from the past comes from the BBC Radio Collection, in the form of *Journey into Space*. This is not the original 1953 production, but the 1957 transcription services re-recording, which was repeated recently. I expected not to enjoy this series at all, but found myself hooked after the first couple of episodes (there are 12 half-hour episodes in total). There are annoying aspects which were obviously included to explain the concepts of *Space* travel to an audience which had not become accustomed to such things, but why Lemmy (the 'light relief' character) should have been sent into *Space* not understanding that he would spend much of the journey weightless, I don't know! As I say, I was hooked, and it made the long periods I spend stuck in London traffic jams bearable for a while!

Reviewed this issue

(Except where stated, catalogue numbers refer to CD).

The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (That's Entertainment COTER 162)

The Prisoner (Silva Screen Film CD 042)

The Soundtracks of Jerry Goldsmith with the Philharmonia (Decca S2D 757-2)

The Final Conflict (Decca S2D 757-2)

Halloween 5 - The Revenge of Michael Myers (album) (Varèse Sarabande VS-5239)

Christine (album) (Colosseum CSD 0043)

Journey into Space (Varèse Sarabande VCD4772)

(BBC Radio Collection: cassettes only)





Above: Tom Savini (left), the special make-up effects master at work on Bingo O'Mally, who plays Valdemar in *Two Evil Eyes*. The facts in the Case of M Valdemar. Left, right and below are pictures from George Romero's *Monkey Shines*



George A Romero Speaks Out

A Starburst exclusive interview by Alan Jones

When George Romero was 14 years old he was arrested for throwing a flaming dummy from a rooftop in the Bronx. When questioned by the police, the young Romero cried out, "But we're making a movie!"

FOURTEEN years later Romero made his first black and white feature and the shock waves *Night of the Living Dead* caused around the world are still being felt today. It's virtually impossible to count how many Horror movies owe a debt to Romero's seminal film, one he is now in the process of remaking in colour with make-up genius Tom Savini at the helm. I met Romero in Pittsburgh, his base of operations for over twenty years now, while he was putting the finishing touches to *The Facs* in the *Case of M Valdemar*, his episode in the Edgar Allan Poe duo *Two Evil Eyes* for producer/co-director Dario Argento.

Bad News

With his much aligned *Monkey Shines* finally on release in Britain after a two year delay, I asked Romero to bring me up to date with his career. The last time we had met was during a world promotional tour for *Zombies: Dawn of the Dead*, his former association with producer Argento. But much has happened in the interim period and I wanted to know about *Valdemar*, the *Night of the Living Dead* remake, how *Pet Sematary* caused his relationship with Laurel partner Richard Rubinstein to end and his involvement in the upcoming *Tales of the Darkside: The Movie*.

Because here's the bad news: Romero is seriously considering giving up directing, so disenchanting is he with the industry. His wife Christine Forrest, a featured player in all his fine movies, is supporting this decision too. If Romero does indeed abdicate his position as the Zombie director who put Pittsburgh on the gore-lover's map, then it will be a sad day for everyone who has admired the maturity he has dragged screaming to the genre as a whole.

"I don't see myself as a cult figure at all," remarked Romero. "All I ever see in my movies are the mistakes, the places where



George Romero directs his segment of *Two Evil Eyes*

I could have made it better. I don't think I'm a master craftsman. I often look through a camera lens and feel like Salieri staring at Mozart's chair! My affection for the Horror genre has made audiences think I'm an OK kind of guy. And I'm certainly that. But an artist? I'm not so sure. I love making movies but it isn't a holy sacrament. Rabid fans worshipping at my altar isn't what I'm about. Because I haven't broken through into the mainstream, fans view me as their own and are very protective towards me. Why I think I have this folk hero image is because I stay close to my Pittsburgh roots. That's why I've stood out from the crowd not because I'm a great director. I don't even know why you're wasting your time interviewing me!

But interviewing George Romero I am, despite the self-deprecating low opinion he seems to have of himself. His position

as one of the influential directors of the past two decades is assured whether he likes it or not. And he must like it, mustn't he?

Two Evil Eyes

Two Evil Eyes is as good a place to start as any. So how did Romero get involved in Argento's bloody valentine to Poe? "Dario and I kept in touch after *Zombies* but it was more work-orientated than social. We aren't exactly pals who meet once a year in Hawaii to catch up on each other's gossip! Our good relationship has been preserved because we don't see each other more than necessary. We have a mutual respect and our work is often being compared because we share the same obsessions. I'm very interested to see our two stories back to back for that reason.

"Dario called in August 1986 with the Poe idea involving four directors. My agents were helping him get in touch with people like Wes Craven but it soon became clear schedule-wise how difficult it was going to be to get four directors on the same film, in the same city, at the same time. Dario got bored by the problems this was causing and said 'What if I could get a deal for just the two of us? We would have longer running times and more fun'. And this was the concept that became official in January 1989 when we got the go-

Monkey Shines



ahead from Achille Manzotti, Dario's executive producer."

Argento had already written his segment, **The Black Cat**, at this stage and Romero decided to read all the Poe stories again before choosing one he wanted to adapt. He remarked, "I'm not as passionate about Poe as Dario is although he was the first Fantasy writer I was allowed to read and I have an affection for him. Poe didn't write stories so much as supply seed pods of great ideas, many of which he didn't develop himself. That's why I've never had objections to the Roger Corman Poe films because fashioning a coherent story using his two-page inspirations is literally the only way you can put."

Romero plumped for "The Masque of the Red Death" because he was told Donald Sutherland would be the connecting character between the episodes. He wrote a script tailored for the star set in the future about an AIDS-style plague and crime in the mean streets. He continued, "But I liked it a lot more than Dario obviously did and suddenly Sutherland was out of the picture. Before the issue got confrontational, Corman announced his own remake of the story which set the seal on my own concept."

Sent back to the Poe volumes one more time, Romero decided on **The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar** which had only appeared on screen once before in Corman's **Tales of Terror**. He said, "Again it was a skeletal idea in abbreviated form about what would happen if someone was killed while under hypnosis. I thought it was a unique premise - one I felt I could have my way with without violating Poe too much by adding a back story to flesh out the basic theme. Until Dario pointed it out I had no idea I had chosen the only zombie story Poe ever wrote. Therefore it fitted in to my past work canon and I'm glad I switched as Valdemar is far more commercial."

Valdemar stars Adrienne Barbeau, EG Marshall - two of Romero's **Creepshow** cast, Rami Yada, Tom Atkins and Bingo O'Malley. Romero's contract with Argento limits his segment's running time to tell the story. He said, "It isn't special effects orientated and, as there are only two walking corpses, it's not ambitiously pyrotechnic, more about things that go bump in the night. It's very creepy, especially the freezer cabinet moments, but I doubt whether it will fray your nerve endings."

Argento's track record at the American box-office couldn't be worse. **Suspiria** was the last time any one of his films even matched Italian and Japanese grosses. But Argento adamantly refuses to acknowledge that Romero's name on **Two Evil Eyes** will help break his own name in the more international market place. (a future **Starburst** interview with Argento will focus on these issues).

Romero couldn't care less about Argento's motives though. He said, "I don't feel exploited, I'd work with Dario any time. I may not get top billing, but I'll benefit from Dario's name in Europe as much as he will from mine in America. My one concern was Dario would get the lion's share of the budget, because he was producing,

That didn't happen, we had no arguments - mirroring our amicable partnership on **Zombies**, and I have no complaints. I got the fee I asked for and I approached it as a nice little sidestep, my **Creepshow** for 1990, something I wasn't emotionally attached to, unlike **Monkey Shines**, which I lived with for a long time."

Monkey Shines

Saying Romero was upset by the way Orion handled the release of **Monkey Shines** in America is an understatement. He is still pained by the ill-treatment his best film since **Martin** was given. He explained, "The situation was this: Orion did an audience survey leading them to believe that their two major 1987 releases, **Bull Durham** and **Colors**, were going to be dismal failures. As they looked like having no moneymaking films, **Monkey Shines** was elevated way beyond its importance and placed in the product front line. Then **Bull Durham** opened to great reviews and box-office, and suddenly **Monkey Shines** seemed less of a high priority. Rather than spend time on a good advertising campaign, they slapped it out without any thought. It was a negative pick-up by Orion anyway, so they were never that committed to it, really, in the first place."

Monkey Shines was Romero's first attempt to go Hollywood mainstream and he'll never be suckered in again, as he explained, "Throughout the production period Orion were very supportive. Then they previewed the film and the fights began. They changed the title to the meaningless **Elle** and then the ending which annoyed me more. Studios hide behind the preview concept. It allows them to pass the buck while the product in question gets more emaciated by the day. The inaccuracy of these previews astounds me. One person wrote they didn't like the cars in the movie. Really! Yet Hollywood lets it

self be led around by these report cards. It absolves any guilt from possible failure and this disturbing trend - the quest for a safety net - is very damaging."

Cat Before the Censor Flashpoint

Two Evil Eyes opens this month in Italy and the rest of the world in September. Or will it? Argento's brand of outrageous violence is very much in evidence throughout his slice of Poetic Justice and it could well be caught in another **Opera** situation. Mark my words. However Romero will already have another Fantasy credit under his belt well before this inevitable censor flashpoint. He adapted Stephen King's short story "Cat From Hell" into the **Tales from the Darkside: The Movie** anthology directed by his close friend John Harrison. Harrison starred in **KnightRiders**, was first assistant director on the movie and **Day of the Dead**, and wrote the music for **Creepshow**.

Romero said, "I wrote the 'Cat from Hell' script for **Creepshow 2** originally. But because **Creepshow** didn't do very well - it was before sequels became moneymaking franchises - the remaining stories were slotted here, there and everywhere by Laurel producer Richard Rubinstein. Until recently I had no idea 'Cat from Hell' was even in **Darkside: The Movie**. Drafts of my screenplay kept being sent to me for comments. But after the first five I stopped commenting on Michael (Beetlejuice) McDowell's input. I like John very much and I wish him well with the project. I have had nothing to do with it though."

About his break with Laurel Productions and partner Richard P. Rubinstein, Romero commented, "We still speak to each other and I bear him no personal animosity. He was always honest and I have no axe to grind about how we benefited financially."

Two Evil Eyes: Tom Savini, further at work on actor Bingo O'Malley. At this stage in the film his character Valdemar has been shot twice in the head



But we had many legitimate philosophical differences. I got pissed off at Laurel's increasing move towards television production. I thought we should be doing more movies and resented the television work. What I got most pissed off about 'though was *Pet Sematary*. I was scheduled to direct and even had all the storyboards drawn. I wanted to make it so badly and that's why I decided to call it a day. The end result by Mary Lambert? I didn't like it at all. It was dimwitted."

A New Night of the Living Dead

Now about the *Night of the Living Dead* remake scheduled to begin shooting this month in Pittsburgh. But before Romero speaks, listen to Tom Savini on the subject: "I'm honoured George wants me to

direct because it's the film that shot him to worldwide fame in the first place. I'm getting tired of hearing about the 'ill-advised remake', the blasphemy it represents to the fans who loved the original. Sometimes sequels are better. George has updated the story and added many neat twists and new turns. The original plot is over with in 16 minutes and then it continues. So you're getting a remake plus a sequel in the same package. What's the big deal? What's the problem?"

Romero shrugged, "It was gonna happen eventually anyway and we felt it should be all the original investors who benefited. We were so ripped-off the first time. All 28 members of the Image Ten production company only made \$600 from a film shown somewhere in the world every single day because it entered public domain immediately upon release. That is still being argued in the courts today al-

though Image Ten was granted a temporary copyright to try and control the pirate and colorized versions around. Actually I voted to sell the colorization rights because I'm not as militant over the process as others are. If I'd made *The Maltese Falcon* perhaps my attitude would be different. I couldn't argue with the remake idea, one to finally recoup our initial investment, although I didn't want to direct. I promised to act as executive producer only if Tom directed and we could keep it under control."

If anything fired Romero's enthusiasm for the remake, it was the chance to finally put the record straight over what exactly did cause the zombie plague. He explained, "All you ever see in the movies you make yourself are the flaws. It was always my intention to keep the zombie explanation nebulous. For some reason audiences zeroed in on the Venus Probe rationale more than any of the others I thought I'd neatly tucked in. I wanted to clear that point up by making it less clear, if you see what I mean. I felt strange rewriting the screenplay actually but I'm happy with what I've written. I've stuck to the basics so there shouldn't be too much cause for complaint by the die-hard fans. Tom's television *Darkside* episodes were interesting. He's in exactly the right area to make it work and because he's my friend I trust him implicitly."

According to Romero the final ending of his *Dead* series isn't completely dead either. He added, "What I want to do with *Twilight of the Dead* will be very expensive. Unless the ground rules change I'm going to have a hard time finding the financing anyway. World opinion must change towards violence on screen too or I can't do it. I intend to finish the trilogy(!) with a balls-out comic version before I die. But I have no hard and fast plans just a conceit at the moment. I'm not that excited about doing it because I'll have to work with Rubinstein again."

"Somewhere, sometime, there has to be a place or a person I can be comfortable working with" concluded Romero. "Dario aside, I keep talking to studios in the hope I'll find a producer who will share the same amount of affection for a project of mine that I have. There is this myth about me that I won't talk to studios which isn't true at all. I've gone into so many deals, none of which have become movies, and I can't stay on this endless meeting treadmill forever."

War of the Worlds was a screenplay I loved and wanted to direct for the screen. I got involved, went through the process of studio rewrites, and suddenly it became a television series instead. I often suspected that would happen because the rights were going into public domain in America and Paramount had only to years to exploit their claims. They obviously realised they could make more surefire money with TV syndication. Then Universal asked me to remake *The Mummy*. I wanted to do it but we didn't see eye to eye at all. I'm not a confrontational person and you need that quality to survive in this business. I'm not sure I want to anymore." *

Two Evil Eyes: A novel use for a metronome



PREVIEW

Presented
by
Alan Jones



Sean Connery and Russell Mulcahy during filming of *Highlander*, but what about *Highlander 2*?

"Longer reviews of movies with more merit than usual equals less space for a Coming Soon section."

(Ed: Is this a Confucious quote?)

Coming Soon

Never mind. Next month, read the story behind *Highlander 2 - The Quickening*, in front of the cameras at last, down Argentina way now Sean Connery has finally signed his contract. Director Rus-

sell Mulcahy has been beset by many problems with regard to this anticipated sequel - much anticipated in France anyway, where it will open at Christmas - and he reveals exactly what they were.

From Argentina to Argentina and another exclusive to look forward to. Starburst will be the first publication in the world to review Dario Argento and George Romero's co-directed Edgar Allan Poe tribute *Two Evil Eyes*. "The Pit and the Pendulum" murder in Argento's episode spells censor apoplexy and *Two Evil Eyes* could well enter the *Opera* twilight zone, never to be released properly outside Italy. Find out why next month.

Always

Always is the Steven Spielberg film I've longed to see since *The Sugarland Express*. Less the usual gitty slam-bang affair, more an introspective low-key romantic Fantasy, **Always** finds Spielberg in mature mode, addressing layered emotions and aspects of life he hasn't touched on this side of *ET*. Bored by the faceless productions he usually lends his name to, and the mechanical way he churns out each epic masterpiece, **Always** comes as a very welcome surprise. Versatile has hardly been the word to describe the merchandise maestro of late. Now it can joyously be applied to a superlative reworking of the schmaltzy 1943 Spencer Tracy movie, *A Guy Named Joe*.

Richard Dreyfuss and Spielberg, realising they shared an affection for the vintage MGM Fantasy while filming *Jaws*, promised they would remake it together one day. Add to that hot equation a dream team of fine actors - haunting Holly Hunter, John Goodman from *Roseanne*, an impossibly handsome newcomer named Brad Johnson - and **Always** blazes across the screen with every lofty intention well

Always Audrey Hepburn as Hap, the spiritual guide who sends Pete back to Earth





Always Pete (Richard Dreyfuss) is the unseen, unheard presence who sees the woman he loves, Dorinda (Holly Hunter) in the arms of Ted (Brad Johnson), the pilot he is sent back to Earth to inspire

delined and brilliantly brought to the surface by a director in full, expert control.

Forest-fire-fighting pilot Dreyfuss loses his life in a mid-air rescue attempt. On his way to heaven, he's sent back by a netherworld social worker, Audrey Hepburn in a nice cameo, to inspire novice flyer Johnson to the heights of bravery he achieved. The true purpose of his mission, though, is to break the hold his memory still exerts over girlfriend Hunter who had desperately wanted him to give up the dangerous lifestyle he thrived on. Complications arise when Johnson falls in love with Hunter and there's absolutely nothing guardian angel Dreyfuss can do, except painfully let go and try to leave some sort of lasting legacy to earn his place in heaven.

Spielberg achieves the impossible in the first twenty minutes of **Always**. He etches Dreyfuss and Hunter's sparring relationship, and their pious friendship with Goodman, with such economic precision and style, you feel you've known the characters for years. The main narrative springs from this vitally important base and Spielberg seizes the challenge with admirable assurance. Goodman, cajoling Hunter into burying the past once and for all, expresses vehemence light years away from anything Spielberg has ever put on screen. Hollywood's golden boy is finally growing up.

With unusual special effects by ILM, utilising actual forest fire footage and **Empire of Sun** inspired flying sequences, the few traces of indulgence Spielberg insists on are erased by the impassioned energy displayed by a

superb ensemble cast, draining every ounce of humour and pathos out of Jerry Belson's trenchant script. Note too the striking similarity between this bold affirmation of spiritual bonding and **Close Encounters**. Roberts Blossom provides the link and Dreyfuss' last exit is against an exact location replica of the logo poster from the movie.

A high-toned personal odyssey you feel you've learned something from after the final credits have rolled, **Always** is a richly satisfying and intense human drama from a director who now regains some of my respect. What superficially glitters in Spielberg's universe often isn't gold. But **Always** is - solid and gloriously so. (Starburst rating: 10)

Santa Sangre

Is it an art movie with exploitation pretensions? Or a horror movie with avant-garde vision? Neither - Alejandro Jodorowsky's incredible **Santa Sangre/Holy Blood** is an extraordinary combination of both. Destined to become a cult classic, add shocking, moving, gory, ridiculous, bizarre, excessive, unflinching, outrageous and poetic to the list, and that's what the groundbreaking director of **El Topo** serves up in a sensationally complex study of mental breakdown and sick Oedipal psychosis.

For the first time Jodorowsky keeps over indulgence in deliberate check while authoritatively focusing on his favourite central theme - the intertwining of sex, death and religion. **Santa Sangre** being a razor-sharp socially voyeuristic stroll through Freudian

landscapes comes as no surprise. What does is the landslide of human truths Jodorowsky blends into his startling tale. There's part of us all in Santa Sangre and it takes a director with nothing to lose to confront us with our darkest feelings gift-wrapped in an undeniable sense of what the power of cinema and striking imagery can achieve.

8 year old Fenix and his parents, Orgo and Concha, work in The Circus of Gringo in Mexico City. Orgo

is a womaniser turned on by sadistic psycho-dramas and his latest conquest is 'The Tattooed Lady' stimulated by knives thrown between her legs. Trapeze artist Concha is driven by religious fanaticism and an obsession for her patron saint, Santa Sangre, a young girl who fought to save her virginity despite two brutal rapists cutting off her arms. Catching Orgo with his new mistress, Concha throws acid in his groin and he

Santa Sangre Axel Jodorowsky as Fenix





Above: *Santa Sangre* Blanca Guerra as Concha
Below: *Encounter at Raven's Gate*



severs her arms in demented rage before slitting his own throat. Witnessing everything, Fenix suffers delirium and is institutionalised for 20 years. Escaping from the asylum, he forms a bizarre touring double-act with his mother - a warped freak show, fusing Concha's possessed mind with his arms. But unable to resist Concha's iron will, Fenix is forced to commit grisly murders by proxy, because, in his insane mother's twisted mind, every woman he meets is responsible for her disfigured plight.

Murder leading to a state of graceful redemption is the shock value message beneath the luminous grime of Jodorowsky's *The Hand of Orlac* in style. Shot in stilted English, adding another ethereal level of atmospheric weirdness, *Santa Sangre* is an astonishing kaleidoscope of distorted sleaze and reality open to wide interpretation as each delirious barb inflicts an open wound on our reeling senses. The grim elephant burial ceremony, the demise of a transvestite wrestler, scenes from *The Invisible Man* used to reflect Fenix's unstable mind, a stripper who won't die while under hypnosis, zombie victims rising from graves, enforced drug abuse and the most vicious ritual killing seen outside the cannibal genre all create a stunning feast of delight and disgust enhanced by Simon Boswell's marvellous score.

Moral decline equals spiritual freedom, says Jodorowsky and using Horror conventions in an art attack setting allows him the unrestricted space to explore each facet of human sexuality and angst-ridden guilt. *Santa Sangre* is sumptuously photographed, but it isn't pretty. Nor is it an easy film to come to terms with by any stretch of the imagination - something Jodorowsky insists on if you wish to appreciate his wholly personal, abstract view of the world according to Henry James. This amazing director has created a sublime tapestry of challenging emotions and suddenly sitting through all the idiotic dross of recent years seems worthwhile.

Fenix and Concha squeezed together in an outsize evening gown and high heels to facilitate their mutual dependency on each other is one image I'll never forget. Moments like these only hint at the hallucinatory beauty of *Santa Sangre*, an important signature film of the Eighties.

(Starburst rating: 10+)

Encounter at Raven's Gate

Anthony Ginnane's name on the credits of any Australian film has always guaranteed a consistent quality level. Every genre film this producer has been associated with has had winning combinations of strong direction, originality and plenty of stylish touches. *Thirst*,



Encounter at Raven's Gate

Patrick, *The Day After Halloween*, Turkey Shoot and *Harlequin* are just a few of his quirky productions which made us realise there was more to Australia than *Fosters* and Paul Hogan way before *Neighbours*. Jason and Kylie. Now Ginnane has done it again with the best movie from Down Under since *Razorback*.

Originally titled *Incident at Raven's Gate*, the change to *Encounter* is a more blatant indication to what Rolf De Heer's Sci-Fi thriller is really about. Basically, this stand-out suspense revolves around a paroled ex-convict in the custody of his former brother, the brother's bored wife, a local barmaid and an opera-loving policeman. These five ordinary citizens are involved in a sex, madness and murder spree when strange phenomena occur at Raven's Gate farm, attributed to evil visiting aliens.

The strength of De Heer's atmospheric low-budget exercise is nothing ever gets shown or explained. Everything is left to the imagination - on overdrive, thanks to the creepy photography contrasting extreme black and whites. And the evocative use of sound creates more menace than actually seeing any cheap UFOs or rubber monsters ever could. That's all the flash and dash De Heer calls on to turn his close *Encounter* into one of the first rate kind. The sky raining dead birds and a rabid dog are about as near as one gets to ordinary genre conventions. But you won't miss them in an outstanding film many will say resembles an outback *Blood Simple*.

Encounter at Raven's Gate is tense, engrossing and packed with unusual seat-edged incident. Again, Ginnane comes up trumps with one of the year's better releases, one you'll be talking about and recalled with affection for weeks after.

(Starburst rating: 8)

Leviathan

Leviathan is without doubt trashy, ludicrous and outstandingly stupid. Yet, as over-familiar rubber monster movies go, George Pan Cosmatos's underwater *Alien*



Above: *Encounter at Raven's Gate*

Below: *Leviathan* "We are not alone..."



disguises its huge credibility gaps with a diverging fast pace and superior production design. Cosmatos's vague remake of his past disaster movie *The Cassandra Crossing* plumbs the same depths as *Deep Star Six*, but it's a damn sight more enjoyable - unintentionally or otherwise.

Don't bother trying to spot all the numerous lifts from other recent fantasies. You'll lose count after *The Fly* and *The Thing*. But just when you think there's no room left during the final shock ending to include even the tiniest extra reference, along comes *Jaws* to ensure you'll leave the cinema with a knowing smile on your face after being given a pleasant, if standard, scare work-out.

Shack 7 is the setting for these low voltage phoney horrors. Six men and two women earn their living as deep sea miners in this sub-oceanic apartment block. A Russian shipwreck is discovered by the dumber than usual crew, thousands of miles away from where it was supposed to have sunk, and *Leviathan's* rusty contents are ferried back to headquarters for perusal.

It transpires the Soviets were testing out genetic mutations and a shape-changing virus was given to the Russian sailors in their daily vodka ration. When they turned into blood-drinking half man/half fish monsters, instead of Glasnost-infused sea creatures, the 'Don't Fool With Mother Nature' trials were scuttled and quickly forgotten on the ocean bed. But after being trapped underwater for months, free booze is a big temptation for two Shack hacks. And before long, of unknown origin tentacles with teeth are bursting out of chests, growing to alarming sizes, with a menu of menace and murder on



Leviathan Peter Weller

their mutant minds.

Stan Winston's Aqua Draacula creatures aren't very imaginative or convincingly executed. Fleeting glimpses of the humanoid from the deep surface, until the disappointing full-frontal climax reveals why it wasn't entirely shown earlier. Neither are the roster of good actors, including Peter Weller and Richard Crenna, particularly adept at milking the predictable suspense for maximum effect. They, and Cosmatos, seem content to rely on transferred expectations from other enclosed environment movies. It goes without saying that Amanda Pays, who paid her girl-growing dues in *The Kindred*, is awful as the Sigourney Weaver clone. But as sink or swim hokum goes, *Leviathan* is a scream. Perhaps more with laughter than terror, but still a scream nevertheless. (Starburst rating: 3)

THE GORE (AND MORE!) CORNER

Society

At the 1989 'Shock Around The Clock' festival, I described *Reanimator* producer Brian Yuzna's directing debut, *Society*, as *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* meets *From Beyond*, with a touch of *Debbie Does Dallas* thrown in for good measure. I don't think I was too far off the mark, because *Society* is a really unique shocker about vice and its worse versa.

Yuzna's eye-opening mixture of graphic special make-up effects, startling sexual concepts and the kind of sleazy outrage you would normally see in a hard-core porn film is not recommended for those

easily upset by unflinching depictions of aberrant misconduct. But if you want to see obnoxious scenes from the class struggle in Beverly Hills given a wickedly comic spin, then Yuzna's nasty delve into inhuman behaviour is something you should witness. You may find it hard going, but I guarantee you won't be able to tear your eyes away from the screen.

Aply named Billy Warlock suspects he's adopted, or else why do his A list Hollywood parents refuse to involve him in family affairs? Are they hiding a dark secret or is he paranoid like everyone thinks, including his psychiatrist? Then a schoolfriend plays a tape of his sister's coming out party. Revealed are suggestions she's having an incestuous relationship with both parents - and worse, they killed someone in a rabid sexual frenzy. Billy's fears are compounded when his friend dies in a

car crash and the cassette is mysteriously doctored to sound innocent. There's only one thing to do - gatecrash a VIP socialite gathering he knows his parents are attending and uncover the real truth. But little does he realise, this course of action has been expected. For Billy is the marked sacrifice for a secret society where good breeding is all that counts.

Society jogs along at an even pace for well over an hour while we become privy to Warlock's increasing alarm and nervous dread over explanations for fleeting glimpses of torso-distorted naked girls. The purposely tasteless script, along with Rick Fichter's luminous photography, clues in Yuzna's suggestion of something decidedly weird bubbling under the dazed surface. Quite what is going on, you must find out for yourselves. I don't want to be accused of ruining the ending and the surreal: mur-



Above and Below: Society



derous orgy of melting flesh, rough trade sex, deviant gender blurring and a grim terminal act called 'shunting' are items I shouldn't describe here. Suffice it to say, there's more than a twist in my sobriety with regards to *Society*.

'Gobsmacking' is the only apt description of the make-up effects, by Screaming Mad George. And 'stunning' will be audience reaction to them. Or possibly 'appalled'. *Society* is the thin end of the wedge by gross-out standards, but I'd like to congratulate Yuzna on

daring to put class demarcations under the Fantasy microscope, and then deliberately strip away each pretension to expose the rot beneath.

Society is basically a serious movie about the ruptured fabric of city life, power-dressed struggles and effilm. The whacked-out perversions it shows are fourth-dimension variations of what the rich are really doing to the poor. And how nice to see family movies making a comeback!

(Starburst rating: 8)

ALWAYS: Produced by Steven Spielberg, Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy. Directed by Spielberg. Screenplay by Jerry Belson, based on A Guy Named Joe by Delton Trumbo, adapted by Frederick Hazlitt Brennan, from a story by Chandler Sprague and David Boehm. Music by John Williams. Special effects by Mike Wood, Jim Morris, Jeff Jarvis and ILM. Starring Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, John Goodman, Brad Johnson, Audrey Hepburn and Keith David. 123 mins. Cert 15. Released March 20th

SANTA SANGRE: Produced by Claudio Argento. Executive producers, Rene Cardon Jr. and Angelo Leone. Written and directed by Alejandro Jodorowsky. Music by Simon Boswell. Special Effects by Marcellino Pacheco. Starring Axel, Adan and Teo Jodorowsky, Sabrina Dennleön, Guy Stockwell, Blanca Guerra and Thelma Tixou. 120 mins. Cert 18. Released March 23rd

ENCOUNTER AT RAVEN'S GATE: Executive produced by Anthony I. Ginnane. Produced by Marc Rosenberg and Rolf De Heer. Directed by Rolf De Heer. Screenplay by Marc Rosenberg and Rolf De

Heer from an original screenplay by James Michael Vernon. Music by Graham Tardiff. Special Effects by Jon Armstrong. Starring Steven Vidler, Celina Griffin, Ritchie Singer, Vincent Gill and Saturday Rosenberg. 93 mins. Cert 15. Released March 23rd

LEVIATHAN: Produced by Luigi and Aurelio De Laurentis. Directed by George Pan Cosmatos. Screenplay by David Peoples and Jeb Stuart, from a story by David Peoples. Music by Jerry Goldsmith. Creature Effects by Stan Winston. Mechanical Effects by Nick Allder. Starring Peter Waller, Richard Crenna, Amanda Pays, Daniel Stern, Ernie Hudson, Lisa Eilbecher, Hector Elizondo, Michael Carmine and Meg Foster. 95 mins. Cert 18. Released April

SOCIETY: Produced by Keith Walley. Executive produced by Paul White, Kelzo Kabeta and Terry Ogilvie. Directed by Brian Yuzna. Written by Woody Keith and Rick Fry. Music by Mark Ryder and Phil Davis. Special Effects by Screaming Mad George. Starring Billy Warlock, Devin Devaequez, Evan Richards, Tim Bertell and Ben Meyerson. 99 mins. Cert 18. Released March 23rd

FEEDBACK

Pet Sematary

Pet Booter

For Forest, or Kidderminster I beg to differ with Alan Jones's recent review of *Pet Sematary* which I found to be disturbing and very resonant. The ending (which I won't divulge) is a real knock-out. Stephen King's novel was a variation on *The Monkey's Paw*, a very chilling short story, and although *Christine* is the best Stephen King adaptation, this film comes a close second in capturing that elusive King flavour. This is one movie I won't forget in a hurry. Downbeat endings seem to give films a lasting power.

Apart from Fred Gwynne's performance, the rest of the acting lets the film down, but this only goes to highlight how much better the whole could have been. There are some real shocks, particularly Doc Creed's first encounter with the re-animated cat in their garage. A flashback to an earlier attempt by distraught parents to reclaim their son was a truly nightmarish set of images, and pervading over everything, the ominous and threatening presence of trucks facelessly roaring through the wilderness.

I believe the popularity of the film in America was due to the theme

of tragedy that we all experience some time in our lives. This was dealt with in such an overt manner that it became somehow cathartic. How many other films could portray the shocking death of a young child. The subsequent funeral scenes have a palpable realism attached to them. I've always thought the best Horror films help the viewer come to terms with ups and in his or her life, and it's the only genre capable of dealing with the dark side of life.

Future Solutions

Jed Ashford

Lockwood, Huddersfield
Thoughts regarding *Doc to the Future* BFF - more specifically, the 'How's he going to get out of that one?' ending. Marty trapped in 1955? And we know he gets back to 1985, because of that teaser trailer at the end, right? Think about these four solutions:-
1. 'Old' Doc in 1955, with the stolen DeLorean - this would explain why he is so breathless when he gets back to 2015 - perhaps this follows a scene from *Part III* that we haven't seen yet. Whatever, there's no reason given why he's in such a state - after all, doesn't he subsequently collapse?

2. Doc Brown, back in 1985, hides the stainless steel (won't rust, right?) DeLorean for 70 years, with directions where to find it in his letter. Marty finds it, restores it with Doc Brown's help and zips back to rescue his friend.
 3. The 1955 Doc Brown, who by this time, as we know, has already invented the 'flux capacitor which makes Time travel possible', has only developed it to a very under-developed prototype stage. He manages to send Marty back to 1985, but doesn't know whether he has succeeded or not, as he won't see Marty until he is born some 13-14 years later.
 4. The theorist idea of Time travel - A future Doc Brown and Marty travel back to 1955 with an extra duplicate Time machine, telling Marty that he must rescue Doc and that he must one day take his journey back to 1955, returning to the future in the second Time Machine. It's open to debate, I admit, but it's a technique already used in the first film, with Marty 'giving' Chuck Berry rock'n'roll music. It is a paradox, but if you think about it hard enough, it is feasible (I think!).
- One last thing, when Marty jumped off BFF's roof in the

alternative 1985, did he need to know Doc was there, or could he jump off regardless, knowing that Doc Brown, once he learnt of Marty's death, would go back in time to catch his fall? Just a thought...

Boring Blockbusters?

Christopher Wood

Hackney, London
I'm afraid I can't share Alan Jones views that 1989 was a banner year for Fantasy movies. It has been a year of quantity, but not quality. Where was 89's *Aliens*? *Blade Runner*? *RoboCop*? *Terminator*? If anything, 89 will be remembered for the boring movie, never before have so many been fed up with so much: *Batman*, *The Abyss*, *Ghostbusters II*, *Indiana Jones*, all less movies... I never expected to find myself struggling to stay awake during the blockbuster of the year, *Batman*... It was just so bad! 1989 must also go down as the year with the worst music pails with past glories... is there anything to compare with *Alien*? *The Fly*? *The Thing*? *Blade Runner* etc... NO! Hopefully 1990 will bring a better class of movie... *Aliens III*, *Blade Runner II*, *Doctor Who*, *Total Recall*... we can but hope...

Welcome Back

Michael Sutton

Sheffield, S Yorks
I recently bought *Starburst* 137, the first edition I've read since no 67 in January 1984, and I must admit to being favourably impressed. My man complaint is that *Things To Come* has been reduced from 4 sides of densely packed type, to 4 sides of spaced out print.

A few points about the contents of this issue. It's perhaps worth pointing out that Stanley Kubrick has withdrawn *Clockwork Orange* only from Britain, since I saw it in Paris a few years ago. Does the dreaded BBFC have anything to do with this - ? I wouldn't be surprised.

Incidentally, the version of *The Exorcist* I saw last year at a late show seemed virtually uncut. What is the problem with the film anyway? If we can watch cranial surgery in *Reanimator* in the comfort of our own houses, I'm sure we can cope with Linda Blair masturbating.

The interviews with Richard Rubenstein was very interesting, but since *The Stand* has been scheduled for production since *Starburst* 54, the chances of it even arriving seem pretty remote. And if it turns out like *Pet Sematary* - who gives a damn? Alan Jones's best and worst lists were amusing, although what do you write about a man who

Artwork by Gordon Foulds



Win Win Win

Bless all the saints! Another ripping reprise for the man in the mask who proves there's more money to be made in playing dumb and/or dead than flashing your face across the big screen. (To date, the original and its two sequels have grossed \$200,000,000 in box office receipts!)

So here's your chance to be a winner and see what all the fuss is about - as if you didn't already know! - as you curl up in front of your TV in Haddonfield, Illinois.

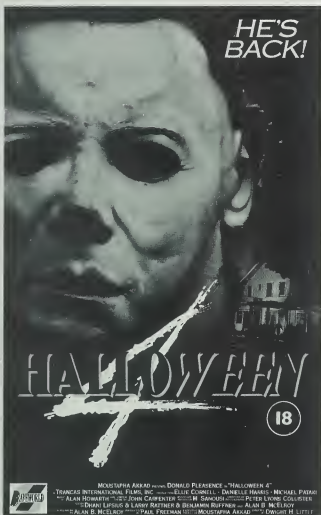
Thanks to our friendly inmates at the Braverworld State Hospital For The Video Insane, we have blood-soaked copies of Halloween 4 to give away for the first ten correct answers to the following questions out of the office body bag by the evening of October 31st. Not only that, but we'll also include matching posters as well.

That should keep the kitchen carver in its place - for a while.

a) Which celebrated genre director helmed the original Halloween, and in what year was it released?

b) Why is Halloween 3 - Season of the Witch considered different from its two successful predecessors?

c) Shocker stalwart Donald Pleasence is in all but one of the four films. Which one?



Send your answers on a postcard to;
Starburst (Hallo), PO Box 371, London SW14 8JL
 Closing date: 31st March 1990

prefers *Return of the Jedi* to *Empire*? For the record, I agree with his view of *The Cook, The Thief etc* (although it's not as good as *Billy of an Architect*), and I think that *Baron*

Munchausen is a masterpiece. Although now 'A Eunuch's life is hard... Aaagh... Aaagh!' But, I hated *Dead Calm* and could only sit through 1 3/4 hours of *The Abyss* (mail).

Who is this guy Richard Sayer trying to fool? Alan Silvestri's only decent score is *Romancing The Stone*, and Chris Young's score for *The Fly 2* sounds positively tiny in comparison to Howard Shore's quite sublime original (as did the film).

On a literary note, fans of great Horror novels should look out for *Shadowland* and *Floating Dragons*, both by Peter Straub, which have been re-issued by Arrow. The former is evocative in the best tradition of *Something Wicked* and the latter knocks the stuffing out of Steve King's generally good, and similar, it.

My only comment about *Doctor Who* is, why don't the BBC show any old episodes anymore? Not all of us can afford videos, you know.

Anyway, just glad to be able to say that I've returned to the fold. Keep it up.

Trek Video

Debate...

Chris Thompson
Blackpool, Lancs

Seeing as I have been the source of several peoples' wrath over the last few months, I thought it might be a good idea to write in and set the record straight before I have the entire staff of Britain's fraud squad breathing down my neck.

First of all, in reply to Mr Philip Knight's letter in *Starburst* 138 who appears to see me as the Captain Hook of the video piracy world, let me say that I personally do not have one copied video or audio tape in my collection. I agree with what he says about piracy starving the film companies of cash and I am totally against it! All I said was that I knew what goes on.

Let me just try and clarify what I was trying to say: we are talking about purchasing two television episodes. Now I can understand someone pricing a film like *The Abyss* or *Star Trek V* at this price, but not a couple of screened episodes! *Star Trek III* was screened on the television not long ago - was this available at £54.95 as well? I can understand that they were screened on American TV, but so what? This does not make them worthy of the price tag they were issued with.

However, I must now withdraw this criticism of CIC, who have now begun to release the first season at £9.99; personally, I will

buy these original copies to keep in my collection.

My second point is to ask why CIC have decided to end their release of the first season with two episodes still yet unseen (*Too Short a Season* and *Home Soil*). Conspiracy I can understand, but not these two. Is there something about them we should know about?

Lastly, Midcon '89 was absolutely brilliant and Gates McFadden was... er... interesting! The second and third season *Next Generation* shown were absolutely excellent, with the final one screened on late Sunday night being by far the best. The episode was called *Who Watches the Watchers?* and it is by far the best piece of *Trek* I have seen for a long time. Watch out for *The Bonding*, when that finally appears - it's supposedly as good as some of the original (*Star Trek*) first season classic episodes, and from what I saw of the third season at Midcon, I wouldn't doubt it. By the way, the titles have been changed for the third season and they're absolutely beautiful: if you don't see them, you're missing one serious piece of photography.

Editor: Paramount decided which *Next Generation* episodes were released, not CIC. As far as we know, there is nothing in either *Too Short a Season* or *Home Soil* which makes them obvious candidates for exclusion. By the way, Chris, we'd love to know what was '... er... interesting' about Gates McFadden!

A K Robinson

Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria

Regarding readers' comments on the way CIC have handled the *Next Generation* videos, I feel inclined to comment.

Many are comparing these video releases with the simultaneous release of the original *Trek* onto the sell-thru market. This however, is fundamentally wrong, as the two sets of videos are tailored towards totally different audiences.

It is obvious that the original *Treks* are being released mainly for the avid collector - standard glossy packaging, complete, uncopied episodes, and in the correct running order. The *Next Generation* videos, however, are geared towards the mass video consumer, ie - those who pay the local video shop a visit once-so often and don't know the first thing about the film and video industry.

And that's how CIC market them. The general viewer doesn't want to see a couple of TV episodes on a video-tape, he may as well have just watched the telly instead. So the episodes are edited together to at least make the length of the tape comparable to that of a movie. And why are the episodes in any old running order? Simple. The



Star Trek: The Next Generation
Commander Riker: He had to do it...

two stories on the tape have to be contrasting in terms of style and storyline to make the viewer feel he's got his money's worth. Putting two episodes together with similar storylines would only convince him he'd been ripped off.

Whilst I'm not trying to endorse this method, I do feel that CIC didn't really have much choice. I'm also very pleased that they're to start re-releasing them onto sell-thru. My only hope is that this time they aim them towards the collector, with the opening and closing titles for each episode and with the series in the correct transmission order. Don't blow it CIC!

Editor: Unfortunately, CIC will use the same master tapes - provided by Paramount - for the sell-thru releases as they used for the rental tapes.

Riker's Motive

S Lloyd

Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs

I am writing to take issue with John Peel's criticism of a recent *Next Generation* episode, which I have seen. Mr Peel states that Riker disintegrates a woman when he could just as easily have stunned her. Was John Peel actually looking at the TV screen at this point? I ask myself: I recall Riker attempting to stun the woman about three times, each time increasing the intensity, but to no effect (she's a special sort of woman, as you'll discover when you see the episode). When he finally gets his phaser to 'kill', he says something to her like, 'Don't make me do this'. Unfortunately,

she does make Riker do it, by starting to lunge at a very important person (the plot has established that her intention is murder). That's why he kills her, and, because he has developed certain feelings for her, he is very upset afterwards. What do you want, Mr Peel? A whole episode of Riker in tears?

The only possible criticism, I suppose, is that one of the alien 'heavies' behind the woman might have thought to kill her - especially since it's their leader she wants to kill. By the way, John Peel's right about the *Alien Nation* series. It's great!

Vincent Morris

Kidderminster, Worcs

ST: TNG is good, but it doesn't have the right atmosphere. It is a series that is an extension of the first series (*Star Trek*) if not a series that chronicles the even further exploits of the Enterprise. But it isn't the same feel, for instance...

a) There isn't as much violence as the original (a bit juvenile, but it's supposed to be faithful to the original).

b) There isn't any overacting, there should be, it worked for Billy Shatner.

c) There isn't at least one totally hopeless situation per episode. d) The sets are too realistic. Even in the 50s, the producers knew that there wasn't the faintest possibility that there'd be astronauts in the 23rd Century with hip, multi-coloured uniforms, but there's every chance of there being people with total neatness and a military - style lack of seams.

Win Win Win

Okay, Flys! Don't be a guy on the wall! Join in the fun - and enter this competition. Remember, 10,000,000 of us can't be wrong.

The buzz is that, thanks to our friendly winged wonders at CBS/Fox, we have copies of *The Fly II* to offer to the first ten correct answers to these three easy questions which stick to the fly-paper dangling from the office ceiling.

For ten lucky runners-up, we have audio cassettes of Christopher Young's marvellous score.

So you can drag that rotting cat out of the dustbin, brundle yourself up in front of the VCR, smear yourself with goo, and enjoy a happy evening's transformation into a *Starbuzz* reader!

Yuck, leave that alone, grub face - it *poohs*!

a) Who helmed the 1958 original *The Fly* - and who the 1986 remake?

b) Oscar-winner and first time director Chris Walas was *what* before *The Fly II*?

c) Star Eric Stolz played opposite Cher in another film which involved hiding behind layers of make-up? What was it?



**CBS
FOX**
VIDEO



THE FLY II

18

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON.

BROOKFILMS PRESENTS ERIC STOLZ · RAPHAEL ZUNIGA · LEE RICHARDSON · THE FLY II
HARLEY CROSS AND JOHN GETZ MUSIC BY CHRIS YOUNG COSTUME DESIGNER STUART CORNFELD EDITOR ROBIN VIOGION, A.C.E. EXECUTIVE PRODUCER SEAN BARTON
SCREENPLAY BY MIKE GARRIS AND JIM KEN WHEAT PRODUCED BY FRANK CARABANT
DIRECTED BY GEORGE LAMDELLAN
CASTING BY STEVEN CHARLES JAFFE
COSTUME DESIGNER CHRIS WALAS

Send your answers on a postcard to;
Starburst (Buzz), PO Box 371, London SW14 8JL
Closing date: 31st March 1990



Fright Night 2 recommended for mere mortals!

Who Defender

Miles Celic

Swinton, Manchester
I was utterly sickened by the views Paul Mount has recently been expressing in his column, and yes, I do mean the things he's been writing about the twenty-sixth season of *Doctor Who*. I admit that Battlefield was a bit of a bad egg, but how can he condemn the superb *Ghost-Light* and the amazing *Curse of Fennec*?

Fennec was the best story in years; it had good acting, was well scripted (something unusual in *Doctor Who* these days) and even Nick Mallet's direction was good. All through the season, Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred acted magnificently (McCoy is to my mind the best *Doctor* ever), and I hope that rumours currently circulating, saying that they won't be doing season twenty-seven are unfounded. What Paul Mount has against season twenty-six, I

don't know, but I just cannot understand his attitude and cannot understand his wish that the series should end now rather than continue into the new era that the Nineties seem to promise. It is a thoughtless thing to say, and I'm sure I echo the sentiments of many other fans in this matter.

Editor, From the response in our mailbox, Miles certainly does echo the sentiments of many other readers.

SF's Return?

Paul Baker

Bishops Cleeve, Herts
Good Lord! Does the surprise success of *Alien Nation* the TV series and the continuing improvement of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* mean that we are in for a return of Science Fiction in the '90s?

It would certainly be nice if it proves to be true, what with *Doctor Who* plunging new depths and *Land of the Giants*

looking so dated and awful. Some new material will surely gladden the heavy hearts of SF fans everywhere.

Your report on *Quantum Leap* made interesting reading as well, keeping up your great track record of American TV coverage.

As for your movie reviews, however, I do wish that you would not insist on printing what look like suspiciously page-filling reviews of films such as *Tales From the Gimli Hospital*. Meet the Feebles and especially *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*. OK, yes, I'm glad you enjoyed them, but did it ever occur to you that some of your readers would probably want to see them as well? The fact that none of the films mentioned have certificates or even release dates serves more to irritate than it does inform.

Digressing to movies that actually are available to us mere mortals, I would like to strongly recommend the Horror sequels, *A Nightmare on Elm Street -*

Part Four: The Dream Master and Fright Night: Part 2 to anyone, who, like myself, was initially dubious of seeing either, because of various unfavourable things that had been reported about them. The fact is, that they are both highly enjoyable.

Tommy Lee Wallace's direction of the vampire sequel is about a hundred times more assured and stylish than his last *Horror* outing, the lamentable *Halloween 3*. As for the further adventures of 'ole razor fingers', it seems almost as if the mythos created was just waiting for Renny Harlin to come along, so he could write and direct this minor classic of the genre. I wasn't particularly keen on Freddy's previous outings, but what I saw in *Part 4* was enough to make me think that Mr Harlin stands a good chance of becoming one of the great directors of the Nineties. I am now greatly looking forward to his next work, *Ford Fairlane*, which I think should help establish him alongside such directors as Paul Verhoeven and Tim Burton.

Editor: 'Page-filling reviews'? At the very least you know the films exist. If they do appear on the late-night circuit or video you'll know if they're worth seeing.

Beauty Mystery Solved

Lesley Davis

Kingswinford, West Midlands
The man obscured in the credits of *Beauty and the Beast* is Elliot Burch, the character introduced in the episodes *Siege* and *Shades of Grey* as someone Catherine got close with, but decided obviously that Vincent was her man. Maybe he deserves such a fate in the credits because the producers didn't want us to see Catherine with someone else before Vincent, who knows?

Editor: Or perhaps they don't want to pay the actor a fee every time the starting sequence is shown! Keep writing...

Young Doctors in Space

by Robin Evans



LAND OF THE GIANTS

A Starburst feature by Jon Abbott

Land of the Giants is an intriguing Fantasy show which attempted to follow in the footsteps of Allen's hit show *Lost in Space* by applying its format to a new theme. The series relates the misfortunes of seven travellers on a 'sub-orbital' flight from Los Angeles to London, who disappear Bermuda Triangle fashion and find themselves stranded on an Earth-like world where they are only two inches high.

THE giant world looks something like 30's America, but is ruled by a totalitarian government known as the Supreme Council. One of its minions, the smarmy inspector Kobick (superbly portrayed by the wickedly under-used Kevin Hagen), is shortly on their trail for the benefits of their superior science (filmed in 1968-69, *Land of the Giants* is actually set in the then far future of 1983!). Kobick, a devious and quietly treacherous man heading the 'SID' (Special Investigations Department), and who even his fellow giants can't trust, spreads propagandist scare stories about the 'aliens' to the gullible populace, and offers a hefty reward for their capture, sending all manner of unsavoury characters tramping through the oversized forest where the castaways have crash-landed, armed with nets, boxes and jam-jars in pursuit of the elusive and 'deadly' 'little people'. Clearly inspired by the bizarre 1940 B-movie *Doctor Cyclops* (the episode *On A Clear Night You Can See The Earth* is a blatant 're-make' of that movie, even to

the uncharacteristic intent of the Space-travellers to kill the threatening giant scientist), and visually very similar, it's a splendid series, and all a very long way from the usual fairytale 'Jack and the Beanstalk' stuff.

Camp Subdued

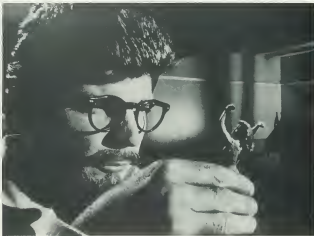
The series is just as dark and brooding as *Doctor Cyclops*, and has to be seen in colour to be fully appreciated. With the 'camp' craze which so heavily influenced *Lost on Space* (and other fairly moderate series as *The Man from UNCLE* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*) now over, Allen elected to play the series straight and a little more adult - at least

during the first season, the episodes of which are distinguishable by animated opening credits rather than the photo montage of the second, final year. Gone were the colourful, garish sets of *Lost in Space*, and the blinding toyland props and costumes of that series, with regular Allen costumer Paul Zastupnevich producing a series of more subdued, realistic outfits, beautifully designed. The colours, sets and costumes are excellent, standing out without punching out, the sets convincing and well-lit, the costumes blending in without appearing drab.

The characters were treated far more realistically than those of the sugar-sweet Robinsons but, as with all Allen series, the action never slowed down long enough for any in-depth characterisations. Nevertheless, the players were confidently defined by Story Editor Anthony Wilson in the early episodes (look for his name as co-writer on the best episodes), and he was not afraid to let his band of castaways quarrel with each other or inter-react.

In the earliest episodes the giants are almost dream-like, somnambulistic lumbering menaces with few lines of dialogue, but as the series developed it became necessary to give them more to do and say to create stories. Unfortunately the writers made the mistake mid-season of shifting the emphasis of the stories from the interests of the Earth party to the dilemmas of the giant-guest stars, and towards the end of the first year a number of stories neglect the series' stars to concentrate on stories revolving around the giant characters into whose lives the 'little people' appear. Examples of this trend include *Shell Game*, *Rescue* and *Return of Inida*, but the only one of these more conventional plots which worked was the sentimental *Night of Thrombeldinbar*. In this, devious con-man Fitzhugh is mistaken by two mistreated orphans as a children's mythological character, a sort of Santa's elf. As a one-off,

A giant entomologist grabs Valerie Scott (Deanna Lund) in one of the many variable sizes the 'little people' were compared with the giants





Episode Listing

Channel Four seem to be running the series in the original network running order. For fans and purists however, here - never before published - is the original order of production for the series, for the benefit of those interested in how the series developed.
(In production order)

SEASON 1

1. The Crash
2. The Weird World
3. The Trap
4. The Bounty Hunter
5. The Golden Cage
6. The Lost Ones
7. Manhunt
8. Framed
9. The Creed
10. The Flight Plan
11. Underground
12. Double Cross
13. On A Clear Night...
14. Ghost Town
15. Brainwash
16. Terror-Go-Round
17. Sabotage
18. Deadly Lodestone
19. Night of the Thrombelaibair
20. Seven Little Indians
21. Target Earth
22. Rescue
23. Shell Game
24. Return of Indu
25. Genius at Work
26. The Chase

SEASON 2

27. The Inside Raas
28. Chamber of Fear
29. The Mechanical Man
30. Collector's Item
31. Giants and All That Jazz
32. Six Hours to Live
33. The Unsuspected
34. A Place Called Earth
35. The Deadly Pawn
36. Land of the Lost
37. Every Dog Needs A Boy
38. The Clones
39. Comeback
40. Nightmare (aka *The Delta Effect*)
41. Home Sweet Home (aka *Return*)
42. Our Man O'Reilly
43. Panic (aka *No Escape*)
44. Pay The Piper
45. Secret City of Limbo
46. Doomsday
47. Wild Journey
48. The Deadly Dart (aka *The Retaliator*)
49. Graveyard of Fools
50. A Small War
51. The Marionettes

the story makes a neat diversion from the usual good/bad giants conflicts and still manages some imaginative moments of horror and menace through the kids' innocent belief in myths. It would spoil the surprise to reveal the twist in the story here.

One strong episode which concentrated on the regular cast, and which was not supervised by Wilson was *Target: Earth*, in which the crew and passengers quarrel and split up over the possibility of an al-

liance with giant scientists which might get them home. In *Home Sweet Home*, two of the travellers actually return to Earth... but in the 19th Century. In *Ghost Town*, a sadistic and spiteful little girl menaces the group in a miniature town which - despite a curious absence of populace - has briefly lend them to believe that they might have found their way back to Earth. There's a marvellous sequence in which one of them is trying to make a 'phone call in a mock 'phone box which is suddenly

In *The Weird World* the castaways encounter the survivor of a previous lost flight (played by Glenn Corbett, who also played Zefram Cochrane in the *Star Trek: Metamorphosis*)



plucked off the ground and suspended in the air by a giant hand!

The Main Characters

The three leads were of the brave, loyal, all-American tough guy breed favoured by Allen in his other series, and as such they were required to do little more than run around and be athletic and heroic, tasks they performed admirably. Allen's series were always well cast, and *Land of the Giants* was no exception.

Gary Conway, previously a co-star in the 60's detective series *Burke's Law*, was fine as Captain Steve Burton, and Don Matheson, who had appeared in previous Allen series as monsters, aliens and androids, had finally earned a rôle in human form as passenger and engineer Mark Wilson. Don Marshall, one of 'The Galileo Seven' in *Star Trek*, was co-pilot Dan Erikson. The other passengers included the nauseating orphan Barry Lockbridge (played blandly by Stefan Arangim, a poor substitute for the likeable Billy Mumy's Will Robinson), glamorous hussy Valerie Scott (played by glamorous Deanna Lund), and Heather Young as motherly stewardess Betty Hamilton, invariably left behind to look after the ship. Also on board was sly, pantylick embezzler Alexander Fitzhugh, played superbly by the likeable roughish Kurt Kasznar, clearly intended to fill the Doctor Smith rôle as troublemaker, but wisely avoiding all comparisons.

Series stars Gary Conway, Don Marshall and Don Matheson spent much of their time waving lighted branches at back-projected snarling rodents, or poking at them with giant needles and sticks. When they weren't doing that, they would be shinnying up to tabletops on knotted ropes with grappling hooks made from space pins, or dodging giant eyes by hiding behind huge books and tin cans, or even scuffling across dimly-lit floors like mice (they discover in an early episode that the giants don't see to well in the dark).

The series offered some imaginative imagery on occasions - the 'little people' cowering in an egg carton, or sticky-taped to a scientist's work bench; a giant screeching crow setting its beady eye on them; a gopher hole ominously beginning to shake and crumble; a fatal spider's web spread across a drainpipe. It was fortunate that as the time the series was in production the blue screen 'chroma-key' process, used and abused so often today, was in its early stages then, and that computer trickery was non-existent; also that Allen was a special-effects perfectionist, and that *Land of the Giants* - at \$25,000 an episode (they cost over a million today!) was the most expensive TV show them in production. *Land of the Giants* used the blue-matte process only rarely, and, on the few occasions it did, the results were disastrous. Instead, the effects were done the hard way, and the results were effective, if costly. A clever employment of camera angles - below for the giants, high for the Earth people - and trumpeting backing



Gary Conway as pilot Steve Burton

music accentuated the effect and added to the illusion.

The Second Season

With the start of the second season, Allen wisely shifted the emphasis of the stories back to the regular cast, rather than making the guest-stars the focus of the story. He also shifted the series even further into the realms of Science Fiction and Fantasy. As had been the procedure with both *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and

Under Inspection, Steve (Gary Conway) and Valerie (Deanna Lund) in the first episode *The Crash*

The Time Tunnel, Allen added further Fantasy concepts to the already fantastic premise, and the little people encountered killer robots, mad scientists, Time-travellers, alien beings and - in one memorable episode - were cloned by a giant scientist.

By far the most outrageous story, 'though, featured Jonathan Harris (Doctor Smith in *Lost in Space*) as the Pied Piper of legend, who - it transpires - is actually an intergalactic traveller who just happened to stop by the planet Earth, just as

AFTER LAND OF THE GIANTS...

Almost all of the cast of *Land of the Giants* seem to have disappeared from public view since the series ended. Matheson and Lund married each other, Marshall returned to playing bit parts (he turns up a couple of times in episodes of *The Incredible Hulk*, as does Lund), and Angim has resurfaced only in a minor rôle in the mini-series *Aspen* and a gory cheapjack Horror film, the title of which completely and mercifully eludes me. Sadly, Kurt Kasznar died in 1978 after a long and distinguished career as a character actor which is topped by the superb and invaluable contribution he made to *Land of the Giants*. In the most boring of episodes, he kept the show humming. His other TV rôles include an episode of *Search* (a *Time Tunnel*-inspired spy series which also guest-starred Deanna Lund), an *I Spy* with Culp and Cosby, *The Girl from UNCLE* and the excellent pilot for *MacMillan and Wife*, alongside Jonathan Harris again. Don Matheson showed up recently as a hit-man in a *Murder, She Wrote* / *Magnum* crossover, and Gary Conway was bumped off in a *Columbo* episode by Donald Pleasance. I'd be as interested as anybody to know where they all are now...

he is now visiting the giants' world. An unscrupulous politician intends to use his services (and similarly betray him mayor of Hamelin-style) to rid their world of the little people, perceived as an alien menace.

With the limited novelty of the giant world now inevitably beginning to wear thin, it was these more extraordinary episodes which were by far the most entertaining. Alongside the inevitable silver-suited aliens and future-men which made the wilder episodes of *Voyage* and *The Time Tunnel* such a quality pleasure, Allen and his writers also relied on the old tried and true *Voyage* plot formula of having the cast experience perilous hallucinations. Those episodes, *Nightmare* and the somewhat more desperate filler *Graveyard of Fools*, offer some impressive imagery amid the hokum. Other more outrageous Sci-Fi concepts included an underground civilisation (*Secret City of Lusho*) and a 'teleporter' device which zaps the Earth party around the place (*Panic*). The amusing *The Marionettes*, which allowed the neglected Heather Young and Kurt Kasznar to indulge themselves enjoyably, and the siller, tedious *Camelback* allowed the little people to masquerade as puppets and B-movie special effects respectively!

By now, the writers had done, in fifty-one mostly entertaining episodes (there were only about a dozen or so duds and a couple of real stinkers), just about everything there was to do with the idea. *



Written by
David Howe

Our first book this month topped the best seller lists in the United States. Is it likely to do the same here?

QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

By Anne Rice
Published by Futura Books
584pp £3.99 p/b

Queen of the Damned is the sequel to Anne Rice's two previous vampire books, *Interview with a Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat*. It continues the story of her creations, but to be perfectly honest, does not actually get anywhere in the process.

I have not read the two previous books, and, unfortunately, I am not inspired to do so having read this third offering. This is not to say that *Queen of the Damned* is a bad book, far from it, but for me it failed to rise above anything other than a reasonably good vampire story.

For a start the plot is so simplistic as to be practically non-existent. Lestat is now a popular rock singer and holds a concert to which the vampire population is drawn. His singing has woken the original vampire, Akasha, from her long sleep and she arrives to wipe out all but a few of the undead before whisking Lestat off as her consort. Meanwhile, we hear the story of how the vampires came into being in the first place, before Akasha is

destroyed and the 'good' vampires live to bite another day. That is about it!

Unfortunately the much publicised and talked about concert does not take place until about the middle of the book, and before it happens, there are many long and rambling stories to wade through. Although they may be interesting in themselves, they ultimately seem to have little to do with the rest of the book.

All the vampires are well characterised, with the single exception of Lestat, but as he was the subject of the second book, perhaps one needs to read that to really understand his motivations and desires. However his lack of depth in this book does detract from the enjoyment.

That brings me to perhaps the main bone of contention in the novel. Anne Rice has decided that her previous two books, and indeed this one as well, were actually, in real life, written by the vampires themselves, and there are numerous references to them in the novel. This is annoying be-

cause in our universe there are (probably) no vampires, and there is certainly not a popular rock singer called Lestat who 'pretends' to be a vampire on stage. I don't believe that a work of fiction should include itself in its own fiction as this smacks a little too much of nepotism.

Queen of the Damned is an entertaining read and Anne Rice has some interesting and original ideas as to what vampires are and how they came into being. However, I don't think the book is one of the best vampire books I have read, and nor do I think it is a complete waste of time. It lies somewhere in the middle.

Interview with a Vampire and *The Vampire Lestat* have been reprinted to tie in with *Queen of the Damned's* release so they should be easy to find if any reader wishes to do so. Moving on to a rather quirky book, the sequel to which, *The Drive-In*, is being released by New English Library in September.

THE DRIVE-IN

By Joe R Lansdale
Published by New English Library
158pp £2.99 p/b

A B-movie with *Blood and Popcorn*, *Mad as Texas* and *Read this novel* when you're in a strange mood' says the cover of this novel from Joe R Lansdale, and they could be right.

It is difficult to say whether this book would have been improved by being longer or not, as the concept behind it is not actually explained. A group of kids visit their local drive-in which is showing a succession of grisly horror movies in an all-night programme. Suddenly a meteor zooms down from the night sky and seemingly whisks the entire Drive in off to some other dimension. Where the road ends, a sticky black tar-like wall begins, and this wall dissolves anything that touches it.

So the occupants of the Drive in go steadily crazy, following the films as if they are the ultimate reality and ending up murdering and mutilating each other in homage to their film gods. That is, until the Popcorn Gang turns up. This electrically fused together monstrosity, created from two of the kids becomes the saviour of this world, restoring all corners.

The book is certainly enjoyable and fast moving, in fact one of the annoying aspects is that the lead character (who is telling the story) spends most of the first part of the book in a state of dehydration and delirium, so that the narrative is disjointed and skims weeks at a time to get to the interesting stuff. There is a harsh side-sweep at religion when our hero becomes involved with a seemingly harmless band of worshippers who are happy and self contented. But wait until you see what their communion involves.

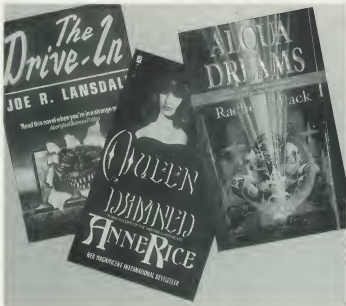
I think that generally speaking, Stephen King wrote the same story far better in his novella, *The Mist*, and *The Drive-In* is an interesting and quirky book, but not really something which excited me. I think that Steve Gallagher, who apparently said about this book: 'A real white-knuckle ride of a book - sharp, fast and very scary' must have been reading something else!

It seems a long time since we last looked at an artwork book in these pages, and I was very pleased to see the release of a new collection of work by Rodney Matthews recently.

LAST SHIP HOME

By Rodney Matthews
Published by Dragon's World
134pp £14.95 h/b £8.95 p/b

This book, a sequel to Matthews' previous collection, *In Search of Forever*, covers a broad sweep of his work from about 1974 to 1988,



although the majority is from the late 1980s.

As with other books of this nature, the subject matter has been split into several sections: Calendars and Posters features a number of Matthews' imaginative circular paintings, used in calendars for 1988 and 1990. These illustrate scenes from Lewis Carroll, J.R.R. Tolkien, Mervyn Peake and C.S. Lewis amongst others and Matthews' style and technique comes across strongly in all of them. Perhaps of most interest to **Doctor Who** fans is an illustration commissioned by an industrial film producers Coast to Coast called **Dr. What?** This was to form part of the conceptual design for the film but when Matthews' involvement became more unsure, it was adapted for a calendar. The picture is also available as a small post card.

Books and Magazines comes next and prominent within this chapter is the work for Michael Moorcock, the author who is most prominently connected with Matthews' work. This is mainly due to the good relationship the two have built up over the years, culminating in Moorcock writing a book specifically for Matthews to illustrate. This collaboration, **Elric at the End of Time** was published by Paper Tiger in 1987.

Record Covers comes next and features work for the bands Magnum and Diamondhead amongst others and finally there is a section on Letterheads and Logos, showing some of the typefaces and

ideas Matthews has been commissioned to do over the years.

All the sections are illustrated with full colour, full page pieces as well as many black and white concept sketches and ideas which have been used in the main pieces.

Overall this is a fitting and impressive tribute to the skill of one of this country's top Fantasy illustrators and with **Dragons World's** traditional high quality approach, the book is definitely worth looking out for.

Finally a look at the second novel from the winner of last year's Arthur C Clarke award, Rachel Pollack.

ALQUA DREAMS

By Rachel Pollack
Published by Legend books
246pp £3.50 pb

Cooper is an Alqua, a dreamer, one who lives in a fantasy world of his own making. The Lukai know that the ultimate truth of existence is that they are all dead, and that 'life' is a massive joke played upon them by the mischievous god Canumaira. They look forward to the day when they trick Canumaira and their souls can leave their fake bodies and return to the true god. Cooper's problem is that he has to get the Lukai to agree to his company plundering their planet of the 'thinking' crystal Rhovium, but as they don't actually believe they are even alive, how can they give him

ROUND-UP

Top of the pile this month is the new hardback from Stephen G. Orthogon Jr. **Ruin** is a tale of a girl's nemesis search to uncover her sister's killer. We'll take a closer look at it next issue. Staying with things horrific and grisly, Michael Scott delves into myth and brings us **Banshee** (Mandarin pb) while from Spine comes a ghost novel from Nancy Thayer called **Spirit Lost** (pb). NEL bring us a couple of Horror titles; **Black Horizon** (pb) is a tale of the dead coming back to life from Robert Mapple and the popular John Farris brings us his **Seize Tactics** (pb). Finally in this vein, Gene Wolfe has a paperback collection of stories from all three genres available from Orbit. **Endangered Species** looks like doing well. Moving to Fantasy and Graham publishes a new hardback from Phyllis Eisenstein called **Sorcerer's Son** and in paperback comes Michael Shea's **Night the Leem** one time winner of the World Fantasy Award. Sheri S. Tepper is gaining fans by the minute and her new paperback, **The Gate to Women's Country** (Corp) looks set to sell well. However, it doesn't mean we're more into our cup of tea, take a look at Rose Estes' **Saga of the Lost Islands** (Bantam pb). Diana Paxson has a new novel coming from NEL, **Lady of Light, Lady of Darkness** (pb) which is the first in **The Chronicles of Westline**. Fans of humorous Fantasy will no doubt snap up **Elfrics Friesner's Here Be Demons** (Orbit pb) while Joyce Kilgus Gregorian's **Tredania Trilogy** is completed with

The Great Wheel (Orbit pb). Dave Duncan brings back 1 of **The Seventh Sword**. The **R.J. Zuckersword** (Lignard pb) and Simon Hawke continues his popular **Time Travel** series. **The Time Wars** with **The Oracle** (Orbit pb). Also from Headline comes a third sword book from **Adrianne Martine-Barnes**, **The Rainbow Sword** comes on from **The Fire Sword** and **The Crystal Sword**. **Orbit** SF now, and from Pan comes a story of laser threat called **Beamriders** by the creator of the **Star Wars** Deller May, **Martian Genesis** while Mandarin continue their series of **Clifford Samk** books with the release of **The Autumn Land and other Stories** (pb). **Claremont** is the subject of **Miles** (NEL), a novel from Wolfgang Jeschke, while a visitation from aliens forms the basis for James Tipton Jr's **Crown of Stars** (Orbit). For younger readers, **Bewer Books** release some more titles in their paperback **Millennium** series: **Robert Silverberg's Project Pendulum** and **Roger Zelazny's A Dark Travelling**. From Orion comes **Not for Glory** (pb) a new novel from **Jud Paterson**, author of **The Guardians of the Flame** series. Finally, mention of two hardback releases. **Allen Steele** has caused a favourable stir with his first novel of future life on a Space station, **Orbital Decay** (Legend hb) is a fine debut. The first book is also a first novel, but the same from a familiar name. **William Shatner** has put pen to paper and come up with **The War** (Bantam hb) a story of polling and drugs in a 22nd Century Los Angeles.

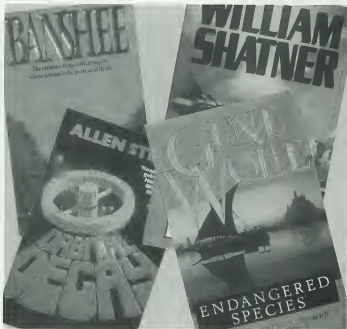
something that does not exist?
The complete success of this

book lies in its concept. Pollack does not waste any time with introductions. The reader is thrown right in at the deep end and with Cooper, and forces you to follow his attempts to talk these people around to reality as he sees it. As their leader, the Death Woman, makes attempts by Cooper to convert her people to the ways of Canumaira, she is both a thorn in his side and the only one who really understands him. Even when he takes one of the Lukai as his lover, he does not really understand the depth of their belief.

Pollack has created a totally believable and effective world. A people deposited on the remains of a dead civilisation aeons ago. The ancient city's machines and holographic images still operate, and there are buildings full of artifacts and equipment which could help the Lukai so much, if they would only believe that they needed help. Nothing of this ancient civilisation is explained, but that just adds to the book's appeal.

To find out if and how Cooper achieves his mission, you will have to read the book. And if you do I guarantee that you too will be hooked on perhaps a contender for this year's awards.

That's all for this issue. Before I go though, a quick note that **Peter Straub's Koko** won the 1989 **World Fantasy Award**. This information did not arrive in time for inclusion in the **Starburst Yearbook** and so it is included here instead! *



By Paul Mount

A funny thing happened to **Red Dwarf** on the way to its third series...

Someone, somewhere decided to take out all the best jokes, beef up the production values beyond even the most ambitious of sitcoms and redefine and defuse the character relationships. The result has been a strangely muted triumph of style over substance, a Science Fiction comedy which leaves you gasping at the special effects and only later wondering what happened to the belly-laugh.

Red Dwarf 3: The Adventure Continues... was practically unrecognisable from its dodgy first season (Starburst 117) and its vastly-improved second season (Starburst 124). The sets have changed (Rimmer and Lister have moved from their filthy crew-rooms to the more opulent officers' quarters); the lighting has become more subtle and more suited to a drama than a comedy; and the characters have changed. Gone is the brittle love/hate relationship between Rimmer and Lister - the pair actually seem to like each other and care about each other these days - and back comes the android Kryten, resurrected from the first episode of the second season.

Kryten clearly inspires writers Grant and Naylor because they give him the best character and all the best lines. Hattie Hayridge's Holly can't hold a candle to Norman Lovett's deadpan version - which probably accounts for Holly's absence from much of the action this year - and only Dany John-Jules's Cat remains as we remember him, with all his intricately observed feline foibles. There's just too much drama in the situations and not enough room for comedy; there's too much dramatic impact in stories featuring shape-shifting aliens and planets where Time runs backwards.

Like the last **Blackadder** series, **Red Dwarf** is a cult which has become public property. Everyone's in on the joke - especially the Press, who have latched onto this new 'youth' cult. And, like the last **Blackadder** series, that joke just isn't funny anymore.

Chronicles

It's a shame I can't report marked changes in the most recent **Chronicles of Narnia** series either. Following on from last year's dreadful *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Starburst 126), *Prince Caspian and The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* filled six episodes. Sad to say, the stories may have been different, but the ingredients and the production were tediously familiar. The lousy acting, the risible special effects, the tacky make-up and costumes, and the thinly-veiled Christian tract, along with that unconvincing lion: it was just as pitiful a display as last

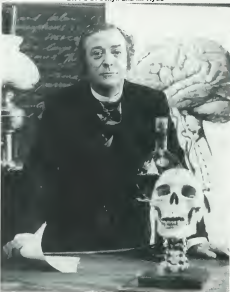


year's efforts. The problem with the **Narnia** series - apart from the fact that the stories are naff to start with - is that the BBC just hasn't the time and money to do them properly.

The shows need a more dynamic, cinematic direction to bring them to life; videotape just doesn't afford that sort of luxury. Like **Doctor Who**, **Narnia** is done in a hurry, with one eye on the

watch and the other on the purse-strings. The result is that neither series is able to live up to whatever potential they may have for whatever audience they're aimed at. And I think that, as it's still fairly early in the New Year, it's best that I remain charitable and don't even mention the so-called sea-monster which opened the final episode of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*...

Michael Caine as Dr Jekyll in LWT's **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**



Bat Classic

I wasn't able to manage every episode of **The Batman**, Channel Four's Christmas holiday daily presentation of the 1943 serial starring Lewis Wilson as the Dark Knight detective and Douglas Croft as his busterous young assistant Robin. But I will admit that I found this dodgy old black and white nonsense quite a bit more enjoyable than a more recent realisation of the Caped Crusader, which I'll otherwise not mention. In this fifteen-part epic, **Batman and Robin** (that hair!) found themselves pitted against the diabolical Doctor Daka and his camivorous crocodiles. The story was filled to the brim with gangsters in tipples, and nail-biting cliffhangers, and what I saw of it was endlessly enjoyable. Let's have the sequel, **Batman and Robin**, as soon as possible and broadcast at a more civilised hour please, Channel Four.

Hoary

ITV opened up their New Year's Fantasy account with **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**, a new version of the hoary old Robert Louis Stephenson Horror classic. From the same stable as last year's **Jack the Ripper**, this lavish made-for-TV special boasted the same sets and many of the same actors, including Michael Caine as the troubled Dr Jekyll and his hideous alter-ego Hyde. The film gave us the usual sanitised, American version of Victorian life - I actually heard a struggling prostitute utter the deathless 'I'm a good girl, I am' line - but with its impressive state-of-the-art **American Werewolf** style transformation effects (all bubbling skin and retracting hair) and familiar lively storyline, **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** managed to inject some new life into a tired story. I can certainly think of worse ways of spending two hours in front of the TV...

Munsters Today

TV nostalgists will want to give a wide berth to **The Munsters Today**, a lame-brained American sitcom currently doing the rounds of many ITV regions. The show is, of course, an updated version of the classic **Munsters** black and white show from the Sixties, with an all-new cast (featuring John Schuck, from **Macmillan and Wife** and the short-lived **Holmes and Yoyo**, as Herman) and, naturally, it isn't a patch on the original. It's not particularly bad, it's just that it lacks the creaking atmosphere of **The Munsters**. Shot in black and white, and with a real feel of the old Universal Horror classics, **The Munsters** was more of an affectionate tribute to its Horror heritage than just another sitcom. **The Munsters Today** is shot on tacky videotape, it's garishly coloured and its humour is frankly unsuitable. Good God, it hasn't even got Lurch... or am I thinking of the wrong show?



Honey, I Shrunk the Kids



For a while Disney lost its way. Audiences fell as the films became a mess of over-sentimentality and lost the 'magic' Walt had put into his films. The 80's saw Disney regain its lost popularity and once again audiences deliberately went to see 'a new Disney film'. The latest film to reach Britain from Disney is the highly successful *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*.

IT is, of course, complete rubbish. If you've read Asimov's *Fantastic Voyage* or if you'll know of all the complications in reducing the size of a body, and somehow a baseball and laser do not ring true

as a useful scientific combination. Similarly, would ants act as the one in this picture? But that really doesn't matter, this is obviously a Fantasy film and the main thrust of the film, as with all good Disney's, is the interaction between the characters, and their maturing - which goes for some of the adults as well!

The Parents

The whacky inventor father, Professor Wayne Szalinski, is played by Rick Moranis, the man previously plagued by ghosts and man-eating plants. It's his machine, naturally, which does the shrinking and it's he who, unknowingly, sweeps the children up into the trash and deposits them at the bottom of the garden. It is a character sure of, and obsessed by, his invention, confused by its apparent failure to work and ridiculed by his colleagues - strange how main-stream scientists are always portrayed as stick-in-the-muds! It doesn't take him long

to realise where the missing children have gone, and he uses every bit of his ingenuity to look for them.

Diane Szalinski is played by Marcia Strassman, a regular on the first season of *M*A*S*H* and *Welcome Back, Kotter*. Diane is getting just a little bit fed up with Wayne's strange inventions, and his preoccupation with his electro-magnetic shrinking machine. She's not exactly over the Moon about the miniaturised children, but readily joins in with Wayne's bizarre search.

The next-door neighbours, the Thompsons, think the Szalinski family is mad and keep well away. Pa Thompson ('Big Russ'), p-p-played by Matt Frewer (Max Headroom), has not quite got the hang of being a parent. He's got roughly the right idea but isn't able to hear what elder son Ron is saying to him. He expects son Ron to grow up as a carbon copy, but strangely Ron doesn't. When the children vanish, it's time to take stock of being a parent.

Being small means the insects are big!



One of the benefits of the invention



Rick Moranis as Wayne Szalinski



Tummy Trouble

"It's like a Forties cartoon on amphetamines!" explains writer/ animator Mark Kausler, when describing the crazy entertainment to be found in the new Roger Rabbit short *Tummy Trouble*, soon to be released with Disney's *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*. "It's a lot faster and a lot more in your face than the real Forties cartoons were because they didn't have the budgets or care expended on them."

In fact, the classic Warner Brothers cartoons of the golden era of animation were the result of an uphill struggle with faceless, uncaring studio executives, who only employed animators because their work provided good programme fillers for theatres. The artists at the Disney Studio, however, had the full support of their boss, the late Walt Disney, and it's a legacy which has been handed down to a new generation of young animators.

It was this same legacy which made *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* such a phenomenal success both artistically and financially, and changed Hollywood's attitude towards the art of the animated film. It was inevitable, therefore, that its star, the crazy, likeable and madcap Roger would be considered for new cinematic adventures along with his voluptuous wife Jessica and co-star Baby Herman.

While discussions continue over a feature-length sequel, the Disney Company are keeping the image of the hare-brained hero alive in a new series of animated shorts. The first of these draws its inspiration from Richard Williams' prologue in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* called *Somebody's Cooking*. Director Rob Minkoff knew that the care and attention lavished on the feature would somehow have to be transferred to each and every one of the new Roger shorts. "We are battling pressure" he told journalist Jim Fanning, "and my own experience, trying to match the quality of *Somebody's Cooking*... which was pretty outstanding."

In *Tummy Trouble*, Baby Herman accidentally swallows his rattle. Panic stricken, Roger takes him to the local hospital where all manner of mayhem ensues. Roger is flattened, smashed

Roger about to undergo his surgical ordeal



Jessica Rabbit and Baby Herman return to pieces and electrocuted. But like the great cartoon stars before him, Tom and Jerry, Wile E Coyote and Donald Duck, Roger bounces back for more. "We had several choices" remembers Kausler. "We had Roger in a restaurant (tentative title 'Hare in My Soup') and one in a circus, and then we wound up doing him in a hospital. That was the picture that finally got picked because Bob Zemeckis thought the setting of a hospital was funny and Steven Spielberg liked it too!"

Additional pressures for the filmmakers were that for the first time in the history of animation, the general public were able to watch them at work, following all stages of the four month production schedule. *Tummy Trouble* was the first film to be made at the Animation facility in the new Disney/MGM Studio Theme Park in Walt Disney World, Florida. Walkways allow visitors to watch the artists, technicians and camera operators at work. It's just one way of making the public more appreciative of how much time and energy goes into the creation of an animated film. Certainly this work is impressive enough, but *Tummy Trouble* does lack the innovation of *Somebody's Cooking*. In Roger's first screen adventure, the epitome of all those zany cartoons produced by Tex Avery and Bob Clampett, it was apparent that directors Williams and Zemeckis were trying to imitate the great animators' style.

The character of Roger Rabbit has been called unsympathetic by some critics. But as Mark Kausler explained to Jim Fanning, the challenge is trying to get the Disney side of him to work with the Tex Avery side. "He's a combination of so many things. He has his cute aspects and he's also wacky, so sometimes it's hard to do both at the same time..."

Whatever the pitfalls, the box-office draw of *Tummy Trouble* and the enthusiasm generated by audiences for the soon to be released (in America) *Rollercoaster Rabbit*, will ensure a rosy future for one of Hollywood's brightest new stars, the inimitable, the unique, *Roger Rabbit*. *

Richard Holliss

Kristine (Legal Eagles) Sutherland is Mae Thompson, caught in the middle of the father/son gap. She understands both sides, but can't bring the two together. In fact, she almost treats Big Russ as another of her children.

The Children

Robert Oliveri plays Nick Szalinski and, like his father, is very clever - almost as much as his father it seems! His older sister Amy (Amy O'Neill) is well on her way to becoming a young woman, a fact not missed by Ron Thompson (Jared Rushton, Tom Hank's best friend in *Big*) next door. The youngest member of the quartet is Little Russ Thompson, played by Thomas Brown. He is, well... a typical little brat.

This unlikely group is literally thrown together by the giant Wayne into a great adventure - crossing the garden. Like all great adventures it involves a change of perspective (in more ways than one), and in this case growing up very quickly. The fragmented group at the start is at the end bonded together by their adversity and blossoming friendship.

If all this makes the film sound like a heavy social drama then don't worry. It isn't. All the 'deep meaningful messages' are hidden in the fast pace and comic aspects. Above all, the film is *fun*.

Director Joe Johnston has his own memories of the older days of Disney. "Those of us who grew up in the Fifties remember a special kind of Walt Disney film... wonderful excursions that spoke to the adventurous spirit, regardless of age. They were boldly stated films, not afraid to push the envelope of wonder and credibility, yet they had a certain kind of from-the-heart honesty. Through all the unusual perils of moviemaking, the challenge of *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* was to capture that same kind of Disney electricity that makes an audience willingly lose itself in an impossible world."

Production

Joe Johnston is a former art director at Industrial Light and Magic, with a particular talent for combining human characters with special effects (*Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back* to name but two). With producer Penny Finkleman Cox particular attention was paid to the casting of the four children. As Cox explains, "Casting was exhausting. We had to find kids who could convey all the different levels of chemistry that goes on between the four characters. One element was appearance - the kids had to look as though they could be siblings; they also had to resemble the actors who were playing their parents. Amy O'Neill and Robert Oliveri look like they could be Rick Moranis's and Marcia Strassman's kids. We were really lucky."

"For me, it was unique to work with a director who came from a technical and visual background," says Rick Moranis. "The way we shot the movie, my scenes were filmed separately from those involving the kids. Joe was instrumental in helping me understand how my scenes with





The kids arrive for breakfast and try to attract their parents' attention
the children would be put together in the finished film."

Mexico Filming

As the end credits roll, there appears 'Mexico Crew', perhaps a strange location for a film set in an American back garden. In fact the film was shot in Mexico City at Churubusco Studios, where the facilities provided the one vital ingredient: space. This was filled by the world's largest blue screen, an entire suburban town with houses, gardens and a church with a steeple, as well as the oversize sets needed for the story.

The neighbourhood set was based on a home in San Diego, California. Johnston recalls, "I was really excited when I saw what had been built. It really felt like we were in small-town America and not Mexico City. The neighbourhood was important because I wanted to create a typical small town setting against which all these unusual events would occur."

Rick Moranis agrees, "It was exciting to shoot in Mexico City. Even more interesting was the idea of filming a comedy on a set where half the crew didn't speak English. I learned a lot. I'd be rehearsing these scenes and everybody would think I was really being hilarious... then I'd look over at the Mexican crew and they would

Russ Thompson (Thomas Brown), Nick Szalinski (Robert Oliveri), Amy Szalinski (Amy O'Neill) and Ron Thompson (Jared Rushton) find themselves accidentally miniaturised!



Diane Szalinski (Marcia Strassman) and Wayne Szalinski (Rick Moranis) discover their shrunken children!

have this deadpan expression on their faces. They didn't understand a word... but when we were doing physical comedy, they laughed right along with everyone else."

Is Big Better?

After more than nine months of building the larger-than-life props the production began fully in September 1987. Everything was big, including the problems. After all, how do you get 25,000 gallons of mud for a scene? Answer: use 10,000 pounds of Mexican dirt and import 3,500 more from Los Angeles. Was this the end of the problem? Joe Johnston answers, "The real fun began when it came time to mix the water and dirt. There was so much to sift and mix that we had to use outboard

motors to get the job done."

Then there is the simple matter of breakfast, and 16,000 gallons of artificial milk, which is really a mixture of chlorinated water, pigment and a food thickener. Yum, yum.

The forty feet tall grass proved to be one of the biggest problems. Production designer Gregg Fonesca was given the task of producing the grass. "I think they hired me because when asked the question, 'How would you make the grass?' - I had an answer - urethane foam. We spent a lot of time searching for the right fibre to use in covering the leaves. After experimenting with everything imaginable, including ostrich feathers, we decided to use optical fibres. Since we were doing something that had never been done before, we had to fly by the seat of our pants a lot." There must have been a lot of 'flying', with Fonesca and his crews building over forty-eight different sets.

Ant Size

Help comes to the children from a rather unusual ant. Miniatures technician Peter Anthony Zamora explains, "We wanted audiences to think of the ant as they would a character, so we designed its antennae to move in certain ways that communicate its feelings and emotions." The ant, which took five months to make, was built from a latex foam core covered with horse hair and required seven to twelve operators. Another ant was used in post-production by stop-motion animator David Allen. He developed a special effects process to make it possible for the actors to seem to ride on top of the ant.

Special effects, big and small, are important to Honey, I Shrank the Kids but they are not entirely what the film is about. It's the Disney magic which holds the film together. Let's hope the magic is back to stay. ★

To Rent

ARENA (15)

ENTERTAINMENT IN VIDEO
On the edge of our galaxy, there is a battleground where no human has won in 50 years. Until our musclebound hero, Steve Armstrong (geddit?) comes along, that is... Futuristic fight-to-the-death fun set in 4038, when the only form of entertainment known to the downtrodden



CYBORG (18)

PATHE

Jean-Claude Van Damme, Deborah Richter, Vincent Klyn, Dayle Haddon
Belgian martial arts hero Jean-Claude Van Damme ('muscles from Brussels') finally makes the grade in this Science Fiction action thriller directed by Albert Pyun. I've been fouting this guy's ability to plough the Schwarzenegger furrow for a while, and give our Amie a run for his multi-money. The two have already crossed jungle paths, apparently. The temperamental Van Damme 'walked off the set of Predator' - he was supposed to play the bea-see - after 'differences' with the film's star. So the story goes...

With recent smash video successes like *Bloodsport* and *Kickboxer* to his credit, Van Damme will always make a living. But to get to The Big Time, you need a strong storyline, an inventive director and good production values. *Cyborg* has all three. Gibson Rickenbacker (Van Damme), a 'slinger' or paid guide, is a man with problems. In a post-apocalypse world, with a deadly plague ravaging the land, he dreams of an idyllic time when he almost settled down... Unfortunately, that was not to be - his lover and most of her family were brutally wasted by a gang of savage killers, the

masses is a form of cage fighting known as The Arena.

Stop this way! January 24th

THE BURBS (PG) CIC
Tom Hanks in Joe Dante's outish family comedy set in the suburbs, with Carrie Fisher as his wife. Snooping on the weird-looking neighbours next door, the Kopels, Hanks bites off more domestic trouble than he can chew. Observed by amused heavy metal fan, Corey Feldman. On your front lawn. February 16th
CHANGELING 2 - THE REVENGE (18) INTERNATIONAL
Directed by Lamberto Davia. An unfaithful wife kills her husband while carrying his child. Ten years later, a stranger arrives who builds a relationship with the boy - then reveals his supernatural powers.
Demonic: January 28th

CYBORG (18) PATHE See panel

Flesh Pirates, led by the ultra-evil Fender Tremolo (Klyn). But one daughter joined his anarchic mob... Only Pearl Prophet (Haddon), the cyborg of the title - a human



FRIDAY THE 13th PART VII - JASON TAKES MANHATTAN (18) CIC

Heio, sailor! Jason finally quits Crystal Lake to follow a group of the usual hackable, dumb, teenage, walking meat sticks aboard the MV Lazarus (geddit?) for an evening cruise across the river of death to Manhattan. Hardly what you'd call plan sailing.

All aboard! March 2nd

FROM THE DEAD OF NIGHT (15) BRAVEWORLD

Fashion designer Lindsay Wagner nearly drowns in an accident and is welcomed by the 'Walkers' - beings from another world - to join their numbers. Saved from death, the supernatural beings are determined to claim her back. With Bruce Boxleitner and Diannah Carroll. We want you dead! January 16th

implanted with computer components - can save a dying world. Lodged in her delabanks, she holds the secret cure to the plague, which must be carried to the Centre For Disease Control over in Atlanta. But first she must elude Fender Tremolo, who will stop at nothing to rule a dying planet... Gibson reluctantly fakes on Prophet, Tremolo and his henchman - and nids himself of private ghosts in gaining personal revenge.

Okay, so it's hardly an original storyline. And, yes, it borrows design-wise from *Mad Max*. But Pyun lends *Cyborg* some unusual and stylish moments (one of which is the crucifixion scene) which make it definitely worth coughing up for. Frankly, my dears, in the end you may very well be surprised and give a Damme!

Released: February 23rd

HIDER IN THE HOUSE (18)

VESTRON

When Tom Sylkes (Gary Bussey) is released from high security prison, after charcoaling his home and barbecuing his parents, he needs a secure base. Jui (Mimi Rogers) and Phil Dreyer are moving into their dream house - and they have a nice, spacious attic...

'Howdy! I live upstairs!' March 9

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE (PG) CIC

Indy's back - with poppa in tow! Ford and Connery make for a glorious generation gap-filler in this sub-standard re-run of its predecessors - pacy plot, mysticism and all - plus some dangerously wobbly special effects. This time it's the Holy Grail we're after - and CIC think they've found it... Indy will be on your stockist's shelves cheaper than usual for the Easter holidays, and will be even cheaper (around £14.99) for the Summer vac.

Where's poppa? March 30th

JACK'S BACK (18) CBS/FOX

See panel

LADY IN WHITE (16) VIRGIN

Halloween at Whitport Falls is a night Frankie (Lukas Haas) will never forget. In this macabre whodunnit ghost story he witnesses the murder of a young girl - and confronts the

mysterious Lady In White. With Broadway's Len Cariu and Soap's Katherine Helmond. Boo! January 17th

LIVING DOLL (18) MGM/UA

A gravely macabre tale! When you love your girl to death - and beyond - it can get a bit wifty. But Howard doesn't mind Christine's corpse gruesomely decomposing so much as the interference in his relationship with Christine from his landlady, Mrs Swartz (the impressive Eartha Kitt) and others... Cliff Richard's favourite film: March 6th

MIDNIGHT COP (15)

NEW WORLD

Action's Horror as Michael Nader (late of TV's *Dynasty*) and former singer Rick Springfield, join the forces of evil after dark as a vampire cop stalks the city with a devilish thirst for blood.

Fangs ain't what they used to be on *Hill St Blues!* February 19th

MUTANT ON THE BOUNTY (18) FUTURISTIC

Oddball Space comedy adventure about Max, a musician who, while travelling through Space, is beamed on board the USS Bounty - 23 years late for his gig! - with no luggage and half his face missing! Face up to it! January 31st

REGENERATOR (18)

COLOURBOX

Sometimes the unknown is better left that way... Perhaps the same may be said for Colourbox's releases... Although, after *Bad Taste*, the trend seems to be upwards (or should that be downwards?) Lots of rolling

To Buy

THE AMITYVILLE HORROR (18) VIRGIN
The Lutzs (James Broder and Margot Kidder) weren't home because in a month-long nightmare as they move in - and out, it's a part of a controversial 'real story' of demonic possession.
BLAKE'S SEVEN RING VIDEO
British Open series in BBC series and novel plots. Re-release of the original three tapes. The Dignifying, David Carr - plus a new video. **Available:** March 8th \$9.99 each
Don't go to the house! January 26th \$9.99
WHY? - AN UNHEALTHY CHILD (PG) BBC VIDEO
The way that Doctor Who is all its episode cycle, complete with opening and closing credits for each of the four parts. William Marshall in the alternative, gritty under pressure of the story, tightly captured scenes of more recent years. This debut adventure plunges the Doctor, his grandfather and best-selling human companions back in time to the Crown of Man - or thereabouts. Superbly shot, but totally compelling.
Shit to hell! February 6th \$9.99
DOCTOR WHO - THE WAR GAMES (U) BBC VIDEO
Two tapes for this miniseries, ten-part finale

for Patrick Troughton's apparently eccentric version of the Doctor. Apparently landing in the middle of the First World War trenches. The Doctor, James and Zoe soon discover that it's possible. Hurst comes out of a quick break, alien scene is devised by the War Lords. Can the Doctor throw them plan without his past catching up with him?
Pursued: February 5th \$19.99
DECEASED TO KILL (16) VIRGIN
Brian O'Connell's 1982 classic transatlantic thriller has Anne Courteney - plus better double - in the most eerie shower scene and an early crawling scene over. With Kevin Costner as Henry Allen solving the riddle of Dr Robert Lister (Michael Gambon). De Palma at his almost best! Feb. Pico Donaghy (cable)
Don't go in the house! January 26th \$9.99
THE MAKING OF A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (16) K-Tel
Made-for-TV documentary which goes behind the scenes and looks at special effects and make-up. All of course, plus loads on Robert Englund to keep Freddy K's legend at large looking at the again.
For those who want: January 26th \$9.99
THE MAKING OF NIGHTMARE (16) PARSFIELD
John McEwen as both viewer and his creation. The story about Lynch's, the first and second prepared to survive the night of horror. Brian Smith's a socio-sensational comedy, with Ann Magnusson as the FBI

consultant (need to watch him as a media folk hero, is both intelligent and fun. Lots of party) February 23rd \$9.99
NOBLESSE TO THE VAMPIRE (18) CBS/FOX
A lady Klaus Kinski in the atmospheric reworking of the essence of Bram Stoker's classic via the early pre-Lupus silent movie version.
Available now: \$9.99
REPUBLICAN (18) CBS/FOX VIDEO
Out 1981 highly disturbing Patience movie, with beautiful young Catherine Deneuve fleshing out the story of a female director, with sexual problems, reflecting American in horror violence. A classic, no more, but in the background. Can't get the record! Feb. January 26th \$9.99
ROTTENLILLY: DOGS OF HELL (TBC) WARNER
An army experiment involving surgical implants in animals turns a pack of Rottweilers into savage killers of Hollywooders around the Lake Louise resort area. (According to news reports, that's what they are already) Good tale for Animal Rights supporters! Originally in 3-D. **Available:** February 16th \$9.99
THE STEPPATHER (18) VIRGIN
Classic tale of the twisted family man who changes his identity, his home and his family to suit his madman needs with alarming regularity. Never trust a man with

a knife who calls himself Daddy!
Stepfather 2 should be adding its way onto your cinema screens soon
Coming to get you! January 26th \$9.99



flesh and rubbery monsters to enhance your evening's viewing.
Unleashed: January 19th
RUSH WEEK (18) GUILD
On campus, fraternities and sororities recruit new members during rush week. But there is a killer on the rampage, recruiting students he then kills, torturing his victims' corpses.
Rare or well done? March 1st
SCARECROWS (18) MEDUSA
When it comes to terror, they're in a field of their own!
Flesh-seeking ghoul, disguised as raggedy scarecrows, dine out on commando-trained thieves parachuting after stolen loot
Get stuffed! January 17th
TIME TRACKERS (U) MGM/UA
This kids' action-adventure (produced by Roger Corman) has a bunch of chaps from 2033 going back to medieval England in 1146, via a Time machine, to stop the evil Dr Zander killing off their ancestors.
What time is it? February 13th
WITCHCRAFT - PART 2: THE TEMPTRESS (18)
BOX OFFICE / COLOURBOX
Satan's heir is kidnapped and the King of Evil himself, no less, unleashes a secret weapon, the

angel of seduction, Dolores (introducing Della Shepherd) - to secure his triumphant return. Is she the sexy key to the Devil's plot, so get ready to bung up that keyhole!
Flying tonight! February 16th
THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE (PG)
ENTERTAINMENT IN VIDEO
Joan Aiken's classic children's

gothic fantasy adventure. Starring Stephanie Beacham and Mel Smith as an evil couple who attempt to steal Wiloughby Chase from Lord and Lady Wiloughby, while the couple are abroad. They fire the servants and plot against their two children, keeping them prisoners fed only on gruel.
'Bash the baddies!': February 27th

WORLD GONE WILD (18) WARNER
Bruce Dern guards the life-giving well in a future wasteland where water is one of our favorite things. The local community is terrorized by Adam Ant, and Michael Pare (remember him?) is in there somewhere.
The last drop: January 5th
Compiled by Geoff Simm

JACK'S BACK (18)

CBS/FOX
James Spader, Cynthia Gibb, Rex Ryan, Rod Loomis
Young enthusiastic John Westford (Spader) is a dedicated doctor, way out of line with his extra-curricular activities, as far as his no-nonsense clinic boss Dr Tannerson (Loomis) is concerned.
Downtown, a series of copy-cat prostitute killings is worrying the LAPD. Four Jack the Ripper-style murders have been notched up - each one exactly following the classic pattern of 100 years previous, to the day. The fifth is due that night. And we know this much, she's pregnant.
It just so happens that John took a fancy to a beautiful blonde prostitute (pregnant, of course) in his clinic earlier that day, and he has just had the come-on from colleague Christine Moscan (Gibb), another looker.

About four possible red-herring 'Jacks' are presented to us in the opening scenes of **Jack's Back**. And by the end, unfortunately, not one of them really convinces. Least of all, perhaps, the real one. Although the thriller is stylishly handled, it is too laid-back for its own good. The murders are virtually all over by the time we join the plot. John Westford is himself done-in, in one of the best sequences, by

possible-Jack number 2. Knowing who 'Jack' is - or do we? - doesn't help either. Then enter Rick Westford (Spader, again), John's twin



brother. He 'witnessed' his sibling's murder in a bizarre nightmare - and goes all-out to solve the riddle of his untimely death.
Confused? Well, if the movie were fast-paced and more exciting, you might be. But as it's often so laborious, you have too much time to work out whodunnit as you clinically unwind the intestinal twists **Jack's Back** is an inviting premise which doesn't cut together. Perhaps writer/director Rowdy Harrington was too precise in dissecting the plot, then carving out the crime of direction, to notice he's lost his grip on the tension and atmosphere. An interesting link between two possible-Jacks is intriguingly introduced, for example, then completely dismissed.
A disappointment
Released: February 15th



OVER the years, for some strange reason, several people have written to me asking for advice on how to break into the film industry. Naturally, I am unable to help them, my own efforts in this direction having failed in a spectacular fashion.

Revenge of Billy the Kid

But recently I had the opportunity of meeting a group of young people who seem to have succeeded by dint of sheer enthusiasm and talent. When I spoke to them they were in the process of making *Revenge of Billy the Kid*, a feature-length movie. Despite the title, it is not a Western but a Horror movie in the Black Comedy vein.

I met them in the offices of Montage Films, on the fringe of Soho. I'm not sure who I met on that day, as the microphone on my ancient tape recorder preferred to pick up the sound of the drill in the street outside, but according to the production notes I was given, there's a good chance I met Jim Groom, Tim Dennison and David Read. Groom and Dennison formed Montage Films together; Groom is the director of *Revenge...* as well as being the film's editor and co-writer of the script, while Dennison is the producer and co-writer. Richard Mathews, who has written for several comedians, including Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones, also worked on the script. I know I did meet Samantha Perkins on that drill-dominated day, because she was the only female present in the office and, thus, by a clever process of elimination, I can be sure it was her. She plays Ronnie, the film's leading character, and though she's had a lot of theatrical experience, it was her first film rôle.

Revenge of Billy the Kid, according to either Groom, Dennison or Read, is about "... this creature that gets born on a farm on a remote island. It's a kind of goat creature, a mutant, and rather creepy. But despite its appearance Ronnie (Perkins) adopts the thing as a pet. She does for awhile, at least, but then her father kills it. Or rather he thinks he killed it, but after several months it comes back and starts getting its revenge on the family... and it is now big."

The creature - the goat thing, kid etc. (Ah, now you understand the title!) - was created by Neil Gorton, Steve Painter and Alan Hedcock, all of whom have provided effects and make-up on *Hellbound*:

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE

By John

Brosnan

Hellraiser II, *Lair of the White Worm*, *Waxworks* and *Nightbreed* while working for Image Animation. They have their own company now, the aptly-named Pain & Gorr, and *Revenge...* was their first Pain & Gorr company project. According to either Groom, Dennison or Read, the creature "... is really excellent. It comes in 3 stages - 1 is the baby, 2 is about 4 feet high and 3 is Big. What we wanted was a little, sneaky look to it, the kind of look that you can't get when you just put an actor in a costume, so most of the creature shots were achieved by animatronics."

How, I wanted to know, did the

movie come about? How did they succeed in getting a feature movie off the ground in Britain when so many others have failed to get past the creative lunch stage? "Well," said either Groom, Dennison or Read, "the original plan was to produce a package of 3 films, one horror, one action-adventure and one gangster movie. This was after Montage Films had been formed about 4 years ago. We wanted to get scripts from outside sources, but not having a track record we couldn't raise any development money from within the industry. Also, it's hard finding good scripts. Finally we decided to concentrate on just the Horror movie. The idea

for the plot arose from the setting we chose. We knew we'd be working on a tight budget, so we thought of setting the movie on a farm. We would have all the locations we might need in one place - the farm, house, sheds, woods, fields, arrier - and we could put all the actors and crews in local bed-and-breakfasts.

"We all got together in a little restaurant off Leicester Square and thrashed out a plot - we'd worked out two thirds of the movie in the first half hour. We don't know yet how much the film actually cost, because most of it was done on deferred wages. When everyone does get paid, we estimate the budget to be about £1.2 million, but we won't approach a distributor until we have a rough cut. We're hoping for theatrical distribution as well as video."

Much of the principle photography took place last November at a farm in Mousehold Cornwall in South Wales. I asked Samantha Perkins how the shooting went. "It was a marvellous experience. Everyone got very involved with and worked tremendously hard - sometimes around the clock - because everyone believed in the movie. Everyone helped everyone else, no matter what their official job, and the atmosphere was great. Michael Balfour (a veteran character actor who plays Giles, her grandfather) said it was like the early days of film-making, when everyone was doing it because they enjoyed making films." And what is her, ahem, unbiased opinion of the movie? "It's brilliant! It's not just a Horror movie - it's unlike anything else!" It all goes well, it will be released sometime in Spring this year. For the sake of promoting new, young talent in the British film industry, let's hope it proves to be a success.

Shooting *Revenge of Billy the Kid*



Land of the Giants

Harry Adam Knight has noticed another odd thing about his favourite TV series *Land of the Giants*, he thinks it's odd that none of the little people find it odd that the big people on this alien planet speak English. I told Harry this was nothing new in SF movies. After all, Charlton Heston didn't seem at all surprised that the apes spoke English in *Planet of the Apes*. I mean, if he'd put two and two together, he would have figured out he was back on Earth much more quickly. Harry was impressed, he hadn't thought of that before.

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